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Mobile Beat

THE MOBILE ENTERTAINER'S MAGAZINE

ISSUE 137 SEPTEMBER 2011

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TO GETTING REFERRALS**

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BOBBY MORGANSTEIN**

**WORKING WITH
NAME ARTISTS**

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**A CLOSER LOOK AT VIDEO
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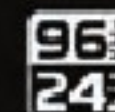
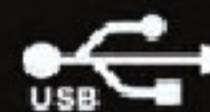
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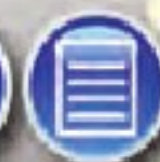
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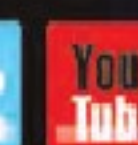
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Image AND Substance

Here we are with another video issue, bringing you fresh info on this subject that is becoming more and more important everyday.

Video has become a standard part of many entertainers' services, and we'll talk about some of the ways you can benefit from it on the following pages. But all this talk about video (editing each issue is like having a conversation with a big bunch of interesting friends) has got me reflecting on just how important the moving image has become to culture the world over.

Revolutions, disasters, riots...or would-be webcam superstars—it's all on video these days, whether professionally shot or captured by phones and handheld minicams. Cameras watch our every move, in stores, on street corners and on the highway. Still pictures and written words are still important, but if it's not caught on video, it doesn't quite seem real for many people.

So there should be no surprise when clients come to expect some sort of video from their entertainer. Depending on your opinion or perspective, the good or bad news is that digital technology has made it a whole lot easier for DJs to deal with the video issue directly, rather than farm out the service to other vendors. (Sorry videographers.)

Ways video is being used by mobile entertainers include:

Video performance—the actual mixing of videos, adding a dimension of sight to the usual DJ domain of sound. Check out our discussion with a sought-after SoCal VJ, DJ MisterE, about what it takes to actually "spin" video.

Video as part of the game show experience. Rob Johnson gives you a whole slew of great ways you can make video a part of your game and trivia presentations.

Publisher Ryan Burger fills in the gaps for us, with ideas for using your screens during the times in-between the tunes. It can't be all visual excitement, all the time (unless maybe you're playing a junior-high dance), so you need some other alternatives, which he describes.

Always looking a little deeper into DJ phenomena, Mike Ficher points out the fact that now the crowd can capture you on camera, any where, any time. So act accordingly.

Which leads me to also ponder the question of substance along with image. In a special show preview piece (with more to follow in the next few issues), seminar speaker Steve "The Hitman" Brazell explains why you need to "Be the Real Deal" more than ever these days. Loose the insincere facade and you'll see how that sets you apart from the herd, in the eyes of clients. Arnoldo Offerman, Jeffrey Gitomer, Jay Levinson and others throughout this issue touch upon the importance of being "real" in performance, business and other situations.

This issue gives you both: help with the images you create, as well as solid advice on the substance you need to be an authentic entertainer, a better business person, and all-round real human being.

Dan Walsh, Editor-In-Chief

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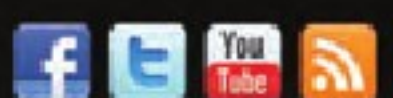
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American DJ Remembers Michael B. Healy

The American DJ family mourns the loss of its dear friend and colleague Michael (Mike) Healy, who passed away suddenly on June 26. Mike was a founding member of the Healy Group, a leading manufacturer's rep firm serving the music, lighting and consumer electronics industries, which has represented American DJ, American Audio, Elation Professional, Acclaim Lighting, Global Truss and Arriba Cases on the East Coast for over a decade.



Universally loved and respected throughout the American DJ Group of Companies and by the retailers he served, Mike was known for his intelligence, integrity and genuine concern for the welfare of others. "We've lost more than a valued and respected business advisor," said Scott Davies, General Manager of

the American DJ Group of Companies. "We also lost a true friend. Mike always looked for the best in people and brought out the best in people. It was impossible to spend any time with him and not feel better about life. He will be sorely missed."

Mike is survived by his wife of 38 years, Kathleen, his son Christopher, daughter-in-law Kendal, daughter Meghan, and future son-in-law Brett Needham, as well as the two special loves of his life, his grandchildren, Cullen Christopher and Brenna Kate; and his friend, brother and business partner, Timothy Patrick Healy.

Aside from his successful business career, Mike was very active in numerous philanthropic, charitable and community organizations, including the Chickahominy Youth Soccer League and the Glen Allen Ruritan Club. Raised in Alexandria, VA, he attended George Mason University.

New Marketing Master at Blizzard

Blizzard Lighting, LLC is proud to announce that Frank Luppino III has joined their team as Director of Sales & Marketing. Luppino is well-known and respected throughout the entertainment lighting industry and has previously served as an executive for another major entertainment lighting manufacturer. He brings more than 20 years of experience to his position at Blizzard.

"I am delighted to become part of a company that has not only embraced LED lighting, but has done so with the goal of understanding and meeting the needs of its customers," Luppino said. "I look forward to the challenge of bringing Blizzard Lighting to the forefront of the market, and we are up to the challenge."

Luppino previously represented Blizzard Lighting throughout the Midwest as former president of Marketing Insights, Inc., an Illinois-based representative firm. In that role, Luppino has been instrumental in driving Blizzard's triple-digit growth over the past 12 months, according to Will Komassa, President of Blizzard Lighting. "Frank has made huge inroads for our company since we first teamed up last year at this time," Komassa noted.

"By bringing Frank on as the head of our sales group, we expect to be able to fully utilize his experience and talent to continue our quest to win over new customers," said Komassa. Founded in 2010 and headquartered in Waukesha, Wisconsin,

Blizzard Lighting, LLC is known for its Puck® series in use throughout the US and world.



DJUniversity

Presented By:



Among the latest articles at DJ University, you will find :

4 Steps to Get Foggers or Hazers at Your Event

By Alan Reiss, Product Mgr, CHAUVET

ADDED: AUGUST 26, 2011

Fog or haze adds more spice to your event in any setting that might be: ballroom, hall or school auditorium. But getting permission to use foggers or hazers can be a complicated process. Be prepared to hear "NO." Each city works differently, so some cities might not allow foggers at all and there's nothing you can do about it. If your client really wants it and you're determined to go through with it, follow these steps, and you shouldn't have a problem...

For the rest of this, and other great articles, go to www.mobilebeat.com/dj-university

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DJ Cruise Returns

The DJ Cruise is back for 2012, and this time we leave from NEW ORLEANS! Start the fun out in one of the original party towns, then get onboard with a ton of DJs and other Mobile Entertainers, Photographers and Wedding Professionals, where the action won't stop on a five-night cruise. In fact, this cruise is open to all family and friends too! The DJ Cruise will be traveling March 5th through 10th, 2012.

Debbie McKenzie, DJ Cruise Producer, has teamed up with Ryan Burger, Publisher of *Mobile Beat* and past DJ Cruise partner, on this new event. This cruise, with two full "Fun Days at Sea," visits Progreso, Yucatan and Cozumel, Mexico. In addition to the standard activities on the Carnival Elation cruise ship, DJ Cruisers will experience extra social events and industry-specific seminars to help their business and performances.

"When Debbie and I combined to create The DJ Cruise for Mobile Entertainers years ago, this was one of the exact cruises I wanted to participate in," says Ryan. "So, when she called me earlier this summer, I said, 'YES, you can count on



Photo by Pejmon Hodaee

Mobile Beat participating! Taking place just a month or so after the Mobile Beat Vegas show, this will be a great relaxing opportunity for the *Mobile Beat* staff, and we will be able to spend quality time with other mobile DJs."

"We are so excited to be starting the cruise in New Orleans, the great party town!" says Debbie, the organizer of the event. "There is so much to do before even starting the Cruise portion. Since this is open to all family and friends, think of it as a fun vacation while you learn! You will have lots of opportunities to meet new friends, relax, learn how to make your business grow and visit exciting ports. If you only take time for yourself just once a year, this is the perfect place to be."

Check out more information at DJCruise.com or call 805-382-4386 to find out more information. Email Debbie McKenzie, DJ Cruise Director, at DJDebbie@DJCruise.com, or for Ryan's personal take on it email him at rb@mobilebeat.com.



MOBILE BEAT ADDS MARK FERRELL'S "SHOUT OF MOUTH" TO LAS VEGAS 2012 LINEUP; PLUS MORE EXHIBIT SPACE

IN THE SEMINAR ROOMS

DJ advocate **Mark Ferrell** returns to the Mobile Beat seminar lineup after his 2011 national tour, with a presentation entitled "Shout of Mouth." It's totally different from last year's "One Song," more along the lines of "I'm Mad as Hell and YOU Should Be too!" DJ Ron Michaels saw a preview, and had this to say about it: "Mark spoke. DJs listened. You could hear a pin drop. Notes were taken. Emotions were high. Mark brought his sledgehammer. There was an air of urgency. It was a wake up call to all."

Mark joins two previously announced featured speakers who will appear at MBLV16, coming to the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas February 6-9, 2012. **Steve Brazell, a.k.a. "The Hitman,"** is one of America's top marketing and branding experts. He helps Fortune 500s, start-ups, small-caps, celebrities, and individuals make more money by communicating their brand stories better. He is the founder of Hitman, Inc., a Competition Removal™ firm, and the author of *Clear! The Simple Guide to Keeping Your Business Alive and Kicking*. And **Moses Avalon**, a former New York record producer and recording engineer who appeared at the 2002 Mobile Beat Show. Today he is an artists' rights activist and the author of a top-selling music industry reference, *Million Dollar Mistakes*. Avalon is a court-recognized music business expert in New York, California, and Florida. He takes on the most controversial issues in the music business today, and has appeared on Court TV, MSNBC, CNN Money Line, Bill O'Reilly and other national TV shows.

IN THE EXHIBIT HALL

Mobile Beat's Las Vegas trade show and conference breaks new ground again in 2012 with a **LARGER SHOW FOOTPRINT** at the Riviera Hotel and Casino,

According to show producer Mike Buonaccorso, "The 2011 floor was bursting at the seams, so we're moving to a LARGER MAIN EXHIBIT SPACE for the 2012 show. The Royale Pavilion will be housing the exhibit floor and demo rooms, plus several nighttime events. The Grande Ballroom, which previously housed seminars and the exhibit floor, will now serve as home to the educational seminars and sponsored workshops at the conference. The rearrangement will also allow for more show-specific networking areas, providing a better experience for all."

For the latest information on the 2012 Mobile Beat Las Vegas Show, visit www.mobilebeat.com.

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Don't Learn...Don't Earn

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

BY PAUL KIDA, THE DJ COACH •



Education! This is a word that often strikes fear in the hearts of many. And it's a word that some feel has little to do with the disc jockey industry as a whole. How do you personally feel about the necessity of continuing education for those starting a career in the DJ business?

Do you feel that it is necessary? Do you feel that there is "no need to go overboard?" Exactly what is the role of further education for mobile disc jockeys?

The definition of the education is systematic instruction, development of one's abilities, and formative experience. It also means to edify and enlighten. Do any of these definitions sound like they refer to our industry? Are they things that you are currently implementing, or things that you would like to start doing?

I'm sure that when we each began our disc jockey careers, we educated ourselves to some degree before deciding that this was the job for us. We no doubt researched the various components necessary to begin our business, such as what was needed for equipment, lights, etc. We did the research about weddings and reception procedures, and spoke with other vendors in the business. We did some research about marketing (web sites, brochures, business cards, etc.) and decided what would work for us. We decided which market we wanted to

specialize in (weddings, schools, clubs, etc.). One of the most important things I did was to speak with other DJs in my area before beginning my business. All of these things combined showed us the ins and outs of the DJ business so that we could be sure that we would have a successful venture that would run smoothly.

EDUCATE...OR STAGNATE

Is that all enough? Did you stop there with your education? The answer to that would be no, if you wanted to continue to be successful. Things change so quickly in this industry! It's important to keep up with the latest trends, as well as create a few of our own. Our performances at wedding receptions, corporate engagements, school dances, and other events should be consistently improving as we continue to develop our abilities. Are you still using the same methods, songs and techniques that you used ten years ago, or have you taken advantage of the vast pool of knowledge that is available for us to enable you to become a more polished DJ?

There are many talented and unique DJs today, so to truly stand out from your competition, you need to continue to learn and to grow to improve. Let's take a look at what is available to all of us that want to master the art of becoming a most excellent DJ. First of all, the

very fact that you are reading this magazine shows that you are interested in keeping up with the latest that is going on in the industry, and that you have a willingness to continue your education. Have you gone one step further and attended the great Mobile Beat Convention in Las Vegas? The information-packed seminars are invaluable to your education! The speakers, seminars and vendor booths found at the MBLV convention will help you develop every area of your business. Not only will you improve in your job performance, but the knowledge received concerning marketing, business management, performance and technology will help take your business to new levels.

GET ASSOCIATED

There are also other local and national conventions held throughout the country. Check with your Facebook DJ friends to find out about these great opportunities to continue your education. Remember, it does not have to be only DJ-related. The Wedding MBA convention is held annually and serves the entire wedding industry. What better way to learn about the many other vendors that we work with every weekend. The more that we understand their point of view, the friendlier they become, and the more referrals we will get.

Are you a member of a national and/or local DJ association? There is probably no better way to continue your education than to become a part of such organizations. For instance, the ADJA has as its primary goal educating DJs and helping them to build better businesses. There's also the added benefit of having a local chapter with monthly meetings that have exceptional content. In our chapter here in Denver, we have had the privilege of receiving instruction from some of the BEST in the business, either in person, or via what we like to call "Skypeinars." We have been enlightened by the likes of Jim Cerone, Larry Williams, Dr. Drax and the Gamemaster, Scott Faver, just to name a few. We also have featured account specialists, tax experts, web site builders, marketing, and the list goes on and on. We not only get to hear them speak, but ask any questions we may have and get answers one on one!

We have touched on just a few of the ways that continued education can help our businesses and performances. We all need to take the time to look at where we stand in this regard no matter how long we have been in the business. If it's all just beginning to feel like regular "job," then it's time to step things up!

The importance of continuing education cannot be underestimated. Seek out every educational tool possible to you, whether it's local meetings, seminars, books, magazines, or any other media. Treat education as if your life depended upon it... because it really does. Remember, if you stop learning, you stop

earning. Keep learning and keep applying that knowledge so that you can be the standout disc jockey that you know you are!

Please send any comments on this article or suggestions for future articles or questions to djcoach@mobilebeat.com. **MB**



Paul Kida, The DJ Coach, is a founding member of the Colorado Disc Jockey Association. He owns JAMMCATTS DJ Entertainment (www.jammcatsdj.com), and is a regular speaker at Mobile Beat DJ Shows.



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HOW TO HELP A CROWD THAT'S HOOKED ON NEGATIVITY

BY ARNOLDO OFFERMAN •

As DJs, we often hear the phrase, “There’s no such thing as a bad crowd.” I’d like to go on record and say that’s a total lie— and I have proof. You see, I am part of the bad crowd.

When I am the DJ, I will jump around and show more energy than a busload of children engaged in Red Bull chugging contests. But put me in front of another DJ and I will grab my seat. Simply put, I do not dance. I am a “broken” Hispanic, as dancing is not my thing. That being said, if I know that not even a 9mm pointed at my head would force me to dance, then how can I expect that as other people should be different?

12-STEP PROGRAM FOR SUCCESS

My events are always high-energy events, and I get people dancing that have never danced in their life. Myself included. (Kinda sorta.) As I see it, there are 12 steps for dance floor recovery from a bad crowd.

1) **Honesty with yourself** is key. Admit to yourself that there is such a thing as a bad crowd. Some really suck, and some are just downright rude.

2) Remind yourself that **YOU are the DJ/MC**. You have powerful tools at your disposal for psychological control of these people: music, lighting, and emotion, expressed through your own attitude.

3) **Rapport** is key. Sure, they may be there for the bride and groom, or to celebrate their company’s 50th year—that doesn’t mean they’ll dance. However take the time to introduce yourself to each table and seize the chance to let everyone know who you are on a personal level. Use this time to make instant friendships and take requests. Now, when you ask (not invite, literally ask) everyone to come on the dance floor and celebrate, they’re more apt to. After all, the request came from someone they “know.” Don’t believe me? Why do you think snowball dances work? Wallflowers are more apt to dance when someone they know is asking them to come on out.

4) I realize this may seem ironic, given this article’s title, but do watch for **drinking**. Look around during dinner and see what genres “lead” more people to the bar. Try a few more of those songs to loosen people up when it’s time to fill the dance floor. Yes, this may be a DJ “crutch” but if the alcohol is there anyway, you might as well use it to your advantage!

5) **Change!** If a genre is not working, keep alternating various

genres until something works. Then build up from there.

6) Don’t be afraid to **say no!** Let’s say you finally have a crowd dancing to rap, after the oldies just would not work. Someone comes up to you and asks you to change it back. What do you do? Be honest! Let them know you tried other genres and NO ONE, including them, got up. If they say they’ll dance to it, tell them you’ll hold them to it. If they really agree, tell them you’ll try to gradually mix it in.

7) At weddings, you should’ve already told your couples that **the party is wherever they are**. Should they forget, approach them and ask what songs they want to dance to. Once you get them dancing, invite everyone else to dance so they don’t “leave the happy couple celebrating by themselves!”

8) **Speed up the songs** just a bit. Yes, this works. I wish I could go further with more facts and proof, but I can only speak from personal experience. Others that have followed my advice reported the same results: It just works.

9) **Beatmix**. Once you have the floor going with a tough crowd, the worst thing that could happen is a slightly “off” feeling in the overall beat. Learn to mix if you don’t know how already. Don’t roll your eyes or bother trying to argue with me about it. There’s a reason that any successful dance venue/club has a DJ who can beatmix.

10) Switch your dance **lighting colors to reds, yellows**, and anything in between. Why do fast food chains use these colors? They create a sense of urgency and heighten the senses; now think about how this would translate to dancing.

11) **Don’t let songs tire out**. If a song isn’t working, don’t just let it go to the end out of a sense of duty or something—mix on to the next track. And remember, keep switching genres!

12) **YOUR attitude is key!** You must take on the stance that if no one is dancing, then you will. I don’t mean to be the “hey look at me” guy, I just mean dancing behind your console; smiling; jamming out! Your energy will become infectious and it WILL sweep the room.

A lot of this sounds like common sense stuff, but I’ve noticed that this isn’t often applied together as a set. Try it, and remember: There IS such a thing as a bad crowd, so ultimately you must play for the fun ones in the group, give these techniques a shot, and pray that the rest will follow. **ME**



A Different Spin

The Evolution
and Revolution
of the Mobile DJ

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BY MOBILE BEAT CO-FOUNDER
MICHAEL BUONACCORSO

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the rich tradition
of his roots...

A pizza delivery guy
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Mike's writing certainly is sharp: He wields his pen as well as a swordsman or a machete-wielding explorer hacking his way through the jungle...It slices with clearly-spoken truth and wry wit that might sting some of the actors in this industry's theater of the absurd, but for the general reader, will make this trip through Mobile DJ history an enjoyable journey with an entertaining guide.

Dan Walsh, Mobile Beat Editor-in-Chief

A Different Spin

The Evolution and Revolution
of the Mobile DJ

Michael Buonaccorso

The "shock and awe" inside look
at the Mobile DJ industry... a
no-holds-barred history of the
strange development of a unique
entertainment phenomenon

The Visual Performer

LIKE IT OR NOT, THE CAMERA IS NOW ALWAYS ON

BY MIKE FICHER •

“Whatcha see is whatcha get,” the Dramatics memorably intoned as part of the collective sigh of relief that, musically, was the early 1970s. In mobile entertainment, the mantra might be “Whatcha hear is whatcha get.”

But does that chorus hold true in the increasingly technology-driven present and in the progressively more interconnected future?

GIVE ME JUST A LITTLE MORE TIME

When potential clients contact a mobile entertainer, while they value the broad entertainment services now so generously available in the brave, new mobile world, their primary focus usually touches on two areas: audio, specifically music; and MCing—the “voice” for the event.

A growing number of DJs offer games, video, tweet screens, dance instruction, and a host of other interactive features. But, clients generally initially seek those two critical foundations of the mobile profession.

BETCHA, BY GOLLY, WOW

In the last several years, though, the world of mobile entertainment has become a decidedly more visual medium on several levels.

Equipment. Many mobile entertainers regularly feature live video feeds as an integral part of their presentation, particularly at school dances. The exhibit floor at Mobile Beat Las Vegas teems with video options and forward-looking, cutting-edge presentation ideas.

Being the Director.

Many entertainers are delving into the world of cinema, recording video to later edit and perhaps mix with music for a documentary of the event or to offer clients moving visual memories. Alternatively, the budding Scorsese or Bigelow may be orchestrating video activities to tell an event’s story in real time—TRUE reality TV.

Portable Recording.

Technology has shrunk video recording equipment to virtually miniscule levels. Before Cisco’s startling decision to dis-

continue the Flip camcorder earlier this year, the unit accounted for more than 35% of all camcorder sales and was the number one selling camcorder on Amazon. Seven million people bought Flip phones.

TALKIN’ ABOUT A REVOLUTION

So, what do all these fast-moving and intriguing developments mean for the mobile entertainer?

Well, as frequently as the entertainer is now the director and the producer (as well as the music director) chronicling what transpires at an event and sharing that on-site or in the future with a client, entertainers—often without their knowledge—have the potential to be the stars of a guest’s video foray.

In addition to the millions of mobile camcorders in consumer hands, the readily available video and camera capability of ubiquitous cell phones translates into the potential to record every waking moment of our lives.

Consider the popularity of YouTube. In May 2011, the Google-owned web site reported a mind-boggling three billion views per day. YouTube estimates that 48 hours of video are uploaded to its site every minute. Alexa (“The Web Information Company”) lists YouTube as the third most visited website after Google and Facebook.

To put it simply: Now we can all be filmmakers and we can all be actors in front of the camera.

YOU’RE A BIG GIRL NOW

The mobile entertainer must now be aware that what they do and say at an event may be captured for private use or even uploaded to, yes, YouTube.

Recently, I appeared as an extra in a motion picture at a local resort where, after chatting with several guests at the pool (scenes were shot on a gorgeous summer day) I was stunned to learn how many did not even know filming was occurring.

As one of my mentors shared with me at an event years ago, “Always remember, Mike, that you are being watched even by one person in the room, so smile and maintain favorable physical presence.”

That sage advice helped create a keen awareness for me that I was always “on stage” when I was at an event. And that sage advice should guide how modern mobile entertainers approach each event—you are always on. Stand tall, smile, offer positive exchanges with guests, be energetic, maintain a dynamic physical presence (even in the quietest moments), remember your lines (figuratively!) and bear in mind that the stage is now everywhere...Not only for the moment in front of your audience, but possibly for posterity. **MB**

**You are
being
watched.**



Mobile DJ, dance instructor, emcee, voice actor, writer, teacher, and improv comedian, Mike Ficher owns and operates Dance Express, based in Bend, Oregon. A three-time presenter and host at Mobile Beat conventions, Mike has been expanding the public’s definition of mobile entertainer since 1986.

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The use of video has changed our lives. MTV has often been credited with changing modern culture. Did "Video Kill the Radio Star?" I don't know. But I do know it has really enhanced the DJ business in many ways.

From a game show or trivia stand point, the advancements in the use of video have been dramatic. For example, the company I represent, DigiGames, has integrated video with its games and greatly increased their "wow factor." The Internet is a wonderful source for great video clips. Combine the two and you have VIDEO TRIVIA—a great way to have a lot of fun making MidWeek Money.

Name-that-video is a popular concept used by many DigiGames users, especially in the Jeopardy format. People can guess the year that the video was released. You can ask people to identify the singer or guitarist, what the song about, what style



Rob Johnson has hosted Trivia Parties and Game Shows for over 10 years. He is the current spokesperson for DigiGames and uses their equipment exclusively. He has performed throughout the United States, Europe and the Caribbean.

Rob is also the owner of The

Music Man, Inc. and performs comedy stage hypnosis shows as The Hypno Man. He has also presented his "Midweek Money" seminar at multiple conferences and conventions including Mobile Beat, WEDJ, Wedding MBA, WedPro2011, ArmDJs, and various ADJA events. If you would like Rob to speak at your local event or demonstrate DigiGames gear to your group, contact him at 701-710-1657 or rob@digigames.com.

Video and Trivia for Fun and Profit

VIDEO & TRIVIA: A MARRIAGE MADE IN DJ HEAVEN

BY ROB JOHNSON •

of music it is and lots of other questions about an abundance of videos. In addition to music videos, I find that movie clips are a great part of the game. Not only do they challenge the contestant but they entertain the audience. Every time I use the "Fat Guy in a Little Coat" clip from *Tommy Boy* with Chris Farley, the audience ends up roaring.

You can also capture TV commercials, play a clip and have people determine the product the commercial relates to. This can also be applied to movie clips. Play a clip of a movie and ask what year it was released, who played the lead role or what the title is.

Minute-to-Win-It-style games are really popular right now and a great way to pitch your services to your client. Download videos from YouTube and add them into a system like DigiGames' Trivia Board and use the video challenges for your own minute-to-win-it games. This brings a whole new level of interaction to your events.

WEEKEND WOW FACTOR

So you only do weddings. You don't mess with the Midweek Money events. No problem.

Get video of your bride and groom asking the questions or doing something. Have the bridesmaids and groomsmen answer the 30 Q's that the bride and groom were videotaped asking. What a great tool for adding a personal touch to the wedding! Another twist is to video bridesmaids and groomsmen asking questions about love, relationships, marriage, and have the bride and groom go head-to-head to answer the video questions. Get the in-laws involved and you will create lasting memories that the families will rave about for years.

An old favorite of mine is the **Newlywed Game**. Have husbands make statements on video that are used in a newlywed type game format. Then ask the wives the questions and play videos and compare answers. Answers that match earn points. Use your creativity to adapt these ideas to your style.

SERIOUS BUSINESS, SERIOUS FUN

Corporate events are always my most suc-

cessful events. Have your client supply video clips from factory or office workers. The video can be of company workers actually asking general trivia questions or a worker can highlight some detail about their life that their fellow co-workers should know about. People LOVE to see themselves in the spotlight. They don't always want to be in front of LIVE audiences, but behind a camera is great.

Be creative: Virtually all smartphones now days have high-resolution cameras that can film stuff on the fly and send it to your PC for immediate use, even right before the start of a show. At your events, utilize this technology to interview guests, faculty, friends, family and create a few questions on the fly. Going the extra mile with your service will set you aside from the competition. It will increase your bookings. It will make you more money.

Sponsorships are something that many performers do not utilize...and thus leave a lot of money on the table. Have a local business supply you their TV or radio commercial. Use the commercial at your events to acknowledge your sponsors before, during or after your show. (I DON'T recommend this for weddings.) I DO recommend you know your client and make sure you are not stepping on any toes or offending anyone. This is great for public performances such as in bars, hotels, resorts and other venues. Many DigiGames users utilize this to generate additional revenue; a going rate is \$500 for a six-month span, for two or more shows per week. This adds up, and will increase your bottom line if done right. Imagine securing only four of these sponsorships every year. It could put another \$4000 in your pocket.

All of these things can be adapted to fit your style. If you know where to look and are willing to put in the effort and time, there is a ton of Midweek Money out there.

I hope you will come see my seminar at MBLV 2012. I love sharing ideas and learning from all the creative people in this industry. Video may have killed the radio star...but it definitely enhanced the DJ business. **MB**

A close-up photograph of a woman with blonde hair and a slight smile, holding a black smartphone in front of her face. The phone's screen displays a quiz interface with a blue background. At the top, a dark blue button contains the text 'PLAYER 1'. Below this, the question 'What is DigiGames working on for 2011?' is written in bold black text. Four answer options are listed in colored boxes: a red box for 'A) Turning cell phones into wireless buzzers.', a green box for 'B) Setting up an entertainer's 3-day convention.', a green box for 'C) Creating performance opportunities for entertainers.', and a dark blue box for 'D) ALL THE ABOVE.' in yellow text. At the bottom right of the screen, it says 'SCORE: 814'.

PLAYER 1

**What is DigiGames
working on for 2011?**

- A) Turning cell phones into
wireless buzzers.**
- B) Setting up an entertainer's
3-day convention.**
- C) Creating performance
opportunities for entertainers.**
- D) ALL THE ABOVE.**

SCORE: 814

(Hint: The answer is 'D')

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Darwin for DJs

THE EVOLUTION OF DJ SALES COMMUNICATION

BY MICHAEL EDWARDS •

If you've been in the DJ business for 10 years or more, you've seen a lot of changes in the way clients find you, contact you and then choose your service over the competition. If you've got 20 years or more under your belt in the DJ business...you've seen some REALLY big changes.

Regardless of your length of time in this game... here's a brief and hopefully mildly entertaining look at the evolution of DJ sales communication techniques over the past 30 years or so.

WHEN PAPER RULED

During the dawn of the DJ "prehistoric era" (approx. 1970 to 1985) it was finally becoming socially acceptable to hire a DJ as the sole entertainment for a major event like a wedding. Before the '70s, live bands pretty much ruled the land and were hired for 95% or more of life's major social events. Back in those days, a DJ's gig leads came mostly from word of mouth, business cards passed out at past events,

from local print media like newspaper classifieds, wedding directories, church or fraternal organization referrals and newsletters, or from an expensive ad placed in the local Yellow Pages.

Anyone interested in booking your DJ services had to call your telephone (land line) number to see if you were available and to ask how much you charged. To be a successful DJ in this environment, you had to be very business-like and answer calls promptly so you weren't thought of as a hobbyist. It helped if you didn't have a dog barking or kids slamming the screen door in the background. Your telephone manner and sales skills had to be every bit as impressive as your stage presence. You had to sell the potential client with nothing more than your voice.

Interestingly, back then, potential clients almost never asked to meet with you. They almost never asked for any references or reviews. They simply listened to your sales pitch, chatted about music a bit, said OK to your price and then asked for the contract to be mailed out. You needed a stamp for that. You also needed carbon paper to make a copy of the typed DJ contract, but eventually they developed

carbonless copy paper with the second yellow "impression" copy that you mailed back to the client.

In those days, there was no such thing as a cell phone, caller ID, email, the Internet, Google, YouTube or Facebook available to locate, check out or contact a DJ. Apple was only a fruit. We just had Colgate mint and Crest mint toothpaste to choose from and only three local TV channels and two 2 UHF TV channels (which were somewhat fuzzy). "OMG, life must have been hell," you're thinking, if you're under 25. Eventually, fax machines did come along, so a DJ's contract and forms could be sent by phone and received at another phone—on the same day! We thought we were stylin' then. No stamps!

GOING DIGITAL

In the '80s, when cell phones were born, a new contact number was added to many DJ business cards. Suddenly you could be reached almost anywhere, at any time. Voice mail was included and it was like a luxury at first: like adding an unpaid employee who would take your messages in a professional manner whenever you decided to goof off and spend the day at the beach. A dutiful DJ typically returned all those missed calls later that night...knowing that the potential clients were home anyway, watching one of the five channels before brushing with mint flavored toothpaste and calling it a night.

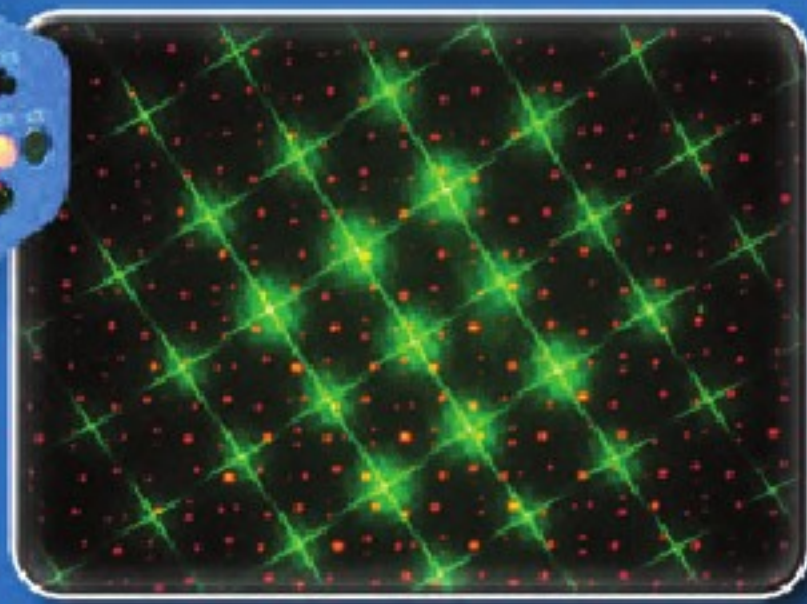
There were also a lot fewer DJs out there as your competition, since it cost a bundle to buy the music, the large, heavy speakers, chrome PA stands, amplifiers, turntables and mixers. We also had to lug all those vinyl records, cassette tapes and eventually, cases full of the newest "high tech" media: our CDs. How innocent and unsuspecting we DJs were of the simple, unassuming pre-fix "digital" back then. The dam would not be able hold back the coming flood. Actually, it was more like a tidal wave that would mark the end of the DJ "Prehistoric Era" and the beginning of the DJ "Proliferation Era." Like a huge digital tsunami that covered up everything in it's path...the unassuming MP3 file appeared. The DJ world, and the music



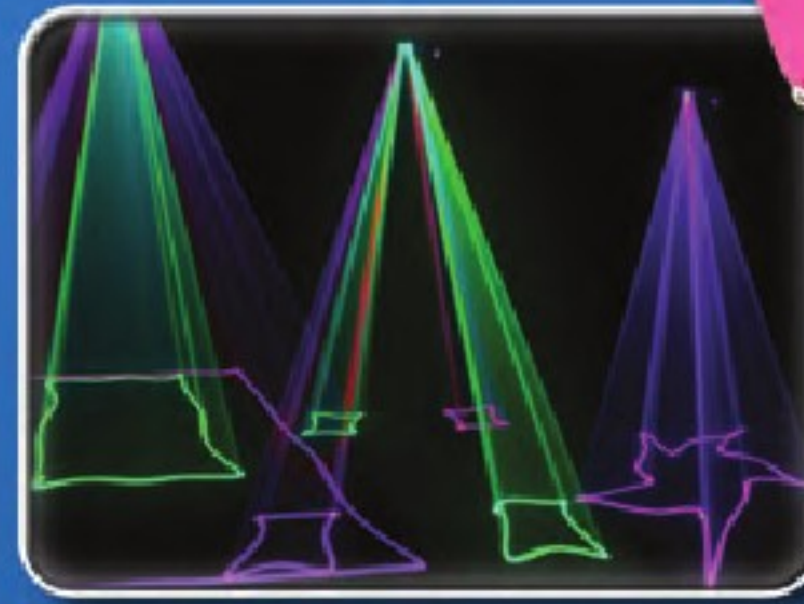
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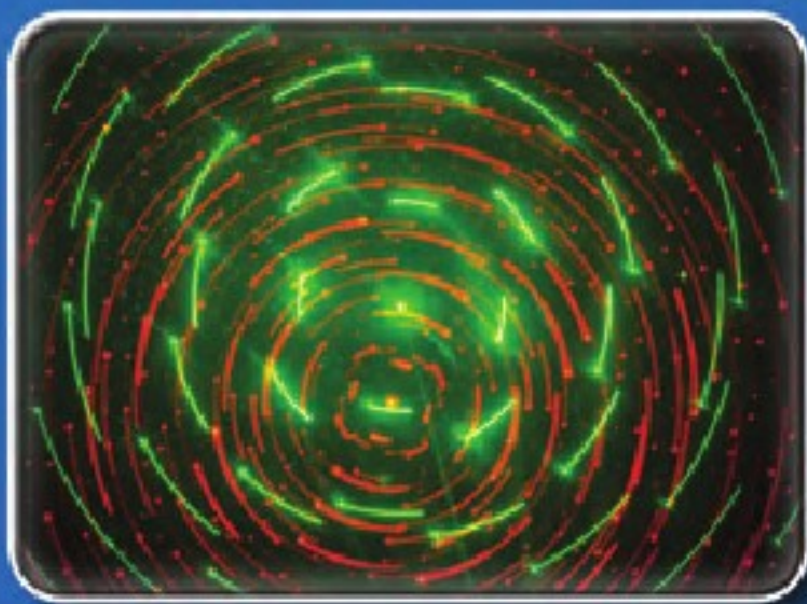
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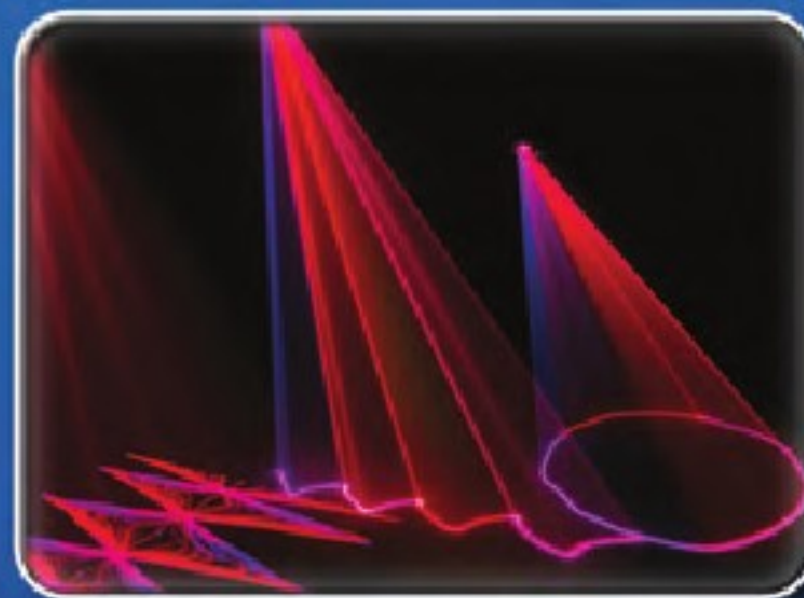
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industry as a whole, would never be the same.

Amazingly, almost overnight, everyone I stopped to chat with on the street or at every event I played was “also” a DJ...or came from an entire family who were now



all DJs...all of whom had exactly the same digital music collection, for some strange reason. Perhaps they all had exactly the same taste in music, the same budget to spend on their collections and the same music organizational skills that I thought took many years as a DJ to learn and cultivate. Ain't technology wonderful? There's a reason I call this point in time the start of the DJ “Proliferation Era” (or should I say “error?”). As the number of copy-the-files DJs increased exponentially, the average quality of DJ services and the prices that were being charged both dropped lower.

Sales for real DJs became an educational process where you had to teach the potential client what they were actually getting when they hired you, and what they might be getting if they took a chance and hired the cheaper amateur. The better educator you were, the more bookings you got. Experience, professionalism, talent and skill were not as valued by the client as price in many cases—until they saw the results at the event, of course. You were constantly forced to find new ways to stay “ahead of the curve.”

Michael Edwards is the owner of AllStar Entertainment & UpLighting, a licensed, bonded musical entertainment agency in Andover, MA, specializing in Greater Boston weddings and uplighting. A member of the Mobile Beat Advisory Board and the American Disc Jockey Association, Michael's sites are www.getadj.com and www.getuplights.com, each featuring a few “ahead of the curve” ideas of their own. Contact him at 978-470-4700 or info@getadj.com.

I saw many “name” DJs who used to be my competitors who didn't change their booking strategies and fell by the wayside.

VIRTUALLY PROFESSIONAL?

Starting in the mid-'80s, crude computers started popping up in DJ offices. And soon a new thing called the “Internet” started to gain in popularity and notoriety. Our first office computer had 1 MB of ram, an 800K disc drive and ran at a speed of 8 MHz. The printer cost \$1,700. I also got my first email address

with AOL around that time. “How else could you get your email without AOL?” we once thought. Someone suggested that I should think about having a website designed. OK, I thought (in 1995), maybe it will bring us some extra business from other “techie” people.

Suddenly, more and more inquiries came by email. I was so annoyed because they never gave us a phone number in the email; and it took a lot longer to type out an individual reply than it would have taken to just give them a quick call and launch into my tried and true Q & A sales pitch. In fact, I soon realized that I might not even get to speak to them at all unless my email reply was better at addressing their needs than the replies of every other DJ they had also contacted. Hmm... How could I get a potential client to know how good my services were and book me without even talking to them? It turned out that I had to make sure my email responses and my website were both as impressive as my sales pitch had once been on the phone. Both would have to do the talking for me. We tried many different ap-



proaches and pathways. It was actually quite a few years later that we added our “Virtual DJ Consultation” videos to our website. We finally found a way to sell our various

services to potential clients using a highly personal “face-to-face” approach—before they'd even contacted us at all.

Today's initial contact from a potential client will rarely come in by phone, unless they are over 35. They email from their Blackberry, click a link on an online ad we are running, or submit an Internet inquiry form from our website with almost no information about their event at all (not even the date)...yet still ask how much it will cost. Try emailing a caterer to ask “How much is a meal?” Or a mechanic: “How much to fix my car?” Whether you're conscious of it or not, we've all had to develop a whole new way of responding and meeting the inquiring client's ever changing methods of contact.

TO THE FUTURE AND BEYOND...

Long before software-based DJ organizational services were available options, we developed our own office database. Today, like many other businesses, three seconds after hearing from anyone who has ever contacted us before, we can be looking at their event file on any screen in our office. We can instantly check our schedule for available DJs and all of our other services, check what we charged their sister 12 years ago and then check inventory on the laser they are thinking about adding to their event next week. That same database can send the latest updates wirelessly to both my smartphone and iPad, so I can operate my company at full efficiency wherever I am in the world, 24/7/365. In addition to our unique client contact/event/status file, we keep database records of our client consultations, employees, schedules for our DJs, uplighting and photobooth events, data on 800+ local function halls, 1,650+ corporate clients, and past event data dating back to 1998, when we first started keeping detailed database records. We can instantly see which brides have not yet returned their wedding forms, who has a balance still due, and when they are scheduled to meet with their DJ.

We've come a long way from the telephones and notepads of the '70s, but I guess the end to this article will have to wait a few more years... because one thing I've learned for certain... nothing ever stays the same for very long. **ME**

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Filling the Screen

OPTIONS FOR KEEPING THE CROWD FOCUSED ON FUN

BY RYAN BURGER •

Eleven years ago, BC Productions (MB's house DJ production company) made the move into video DJing.

At that time, DVD content became readily available through Promo Only's release of monthly *Hot Video* DVDs. Since then we have gone through several stages of our video DJ service, growing it multiple systems. Most often, we still use straight DVDs running on a Pioneer DVJ setup, but sometimes we also use Virtual DJ to mix the videos. And although we have more than enough current and retro video content to fill a marathon dance party with high energy music, we've learned over the years that you simply can't play music videos for an entire show. To avoid audience "burnout," we will periodically fill our screens—plasma TVs and large/mega projection surfaces—with alternate content, to keep the visuals flowing while also giving people's eyes a rest.

CREATING AMBIANCE

From the start of BC Productions' video DJ service, we used "ambient" videos (interesting video loops that can run under any music)

to change up what was on the screens. As they say at PromoOnly.Com, "Ambient video serves up unique animated graphics and contains no music, affording the users the opportunity

to easily overlay these videos into any format, and to thereby enhance the visual effect of any show or club."

Promo Only offers six volumes of *Ambient Video* content on DVD, with a total of nearly 300 tracks, including holiday themes, chroma key, overlays and unique

animated graphics, in both continuous and custom play formats. DVJ Vision (dvjvision.com) also offers similar video content but theirs is mixed differently, with music driving it: "Every clip evolves and tells a story the way a record does," according to their site. The third player in the market with this type of content is best known for their *Shadowdancers* videos, is VJWorld, at VJWorld.Com. And GCG Music has visuals ranging from lava bubbles and fish tanks to fireplaces and candles.

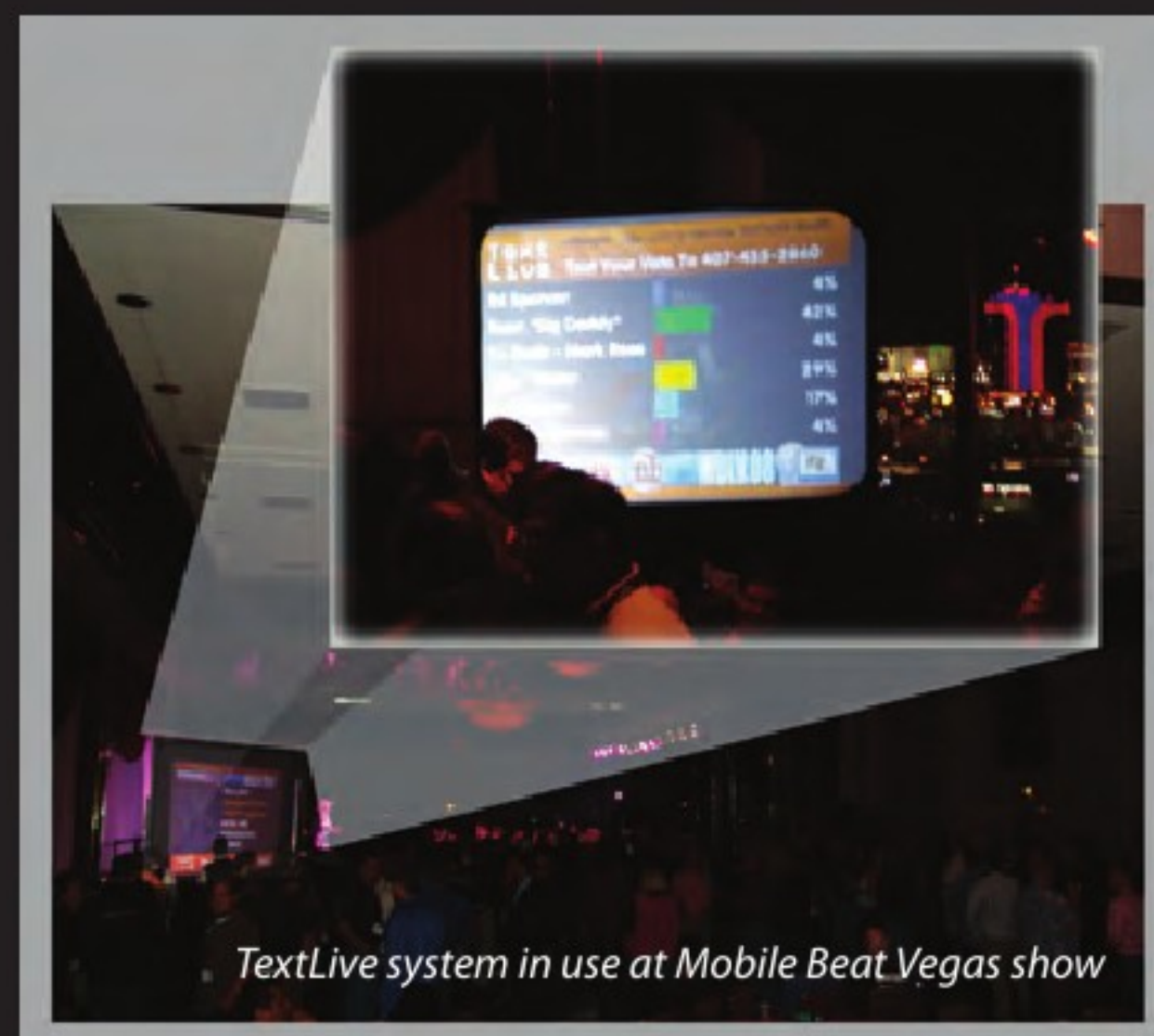
TEXT TO SCREEN

It seems the live entertainment world has gone crazy with texting. The last time that I personally used our text-to-screen system (which was a while ago), I remember getting over 400 texts through the system, moderated, and displayed on our projection system for all to see. Two major options are available in this space for DJs, that take it all the way from receiving the texts to putting them up on the screen in a custom-skinned presentation.

The first product marketed to the DJ industry was TextLive (textlive.com). This offers a nice product that combines all the primary features that are needed for basic text-to-screen, voting, requesting songs, and more. Several versions are available, including an interface to push the content to the Web.

New to the DJ marketplace (debuting to DJs at the MB Vegas show last February) but not new to the technology is FireText Text Messaging Systems. FireText (firetext.com) has developed a fantastic platform for text services. Its feature set is similar to TextLive, but from there expands into other areas, like alternate input methods such as tweets from Twitter, and ShortCode-based input. All of these can be spun into the FireText engine and sent to the screen. The engine also has many other features which may or may not be of use to DJs.

The FireText feature I'm most interested in playing with is a Virtual DJ plugin that allows you to broadcast messages into the Virtual DJ software and actually make them part of a mix. Look for a full review of this product in a future issue of Mobile Beat.



TextLive system in use at Mobile Beat Vegas show

HEY LOOK, THAT'S ME!

A last screen-filling option that's growing in popularity is video content from the party itself. Using anything from a basic webcam to a pro pan-tilt-zoom camera from Sony, as we've started using lately, you can mount cameras on your trussing and even have some basic control over them (with the PTZ type), and use them to show audience members on the screen. This is especially popular at school events. While I don't recommend keeping any individual camera up on the screen for too long (that's asking for trouble), people love to see themselves and their friends, and this can really add an extra level of fun to the party or dance. This is especially true when they are bigger than life on

a 20 or 30-foot-wide screen at a prom!

Basic expense for each PTZ camera is about \$300, plus basic cabling back to the video mixer. You need the capability of mixing video separately from audio (as you need for the other options presented here). Make sure to get a low-lux-rated camera for this as chances are if you are using this at a dance, the lighting on the dance floor will be too low to capture a good image.

These are just a few of the major options available to help you mix up the video content on your screens, and thus create a much better balanced VJ show for your school dances and community celebrations. Be creative and have fun filling your screens! **MB**



Sony BRC Z330 PTZ camera



Photo by Nick Covino

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Your Online Halloween Headquarters

Inside Video DJing

GOOD ADVICE FROM VIDEO MIXER PAR EXCELLENCE, DJ MISTERE

Since we previously profiled DJ MisterE (MB, July 2006), he has become an A-list DJ/VJ in the Hollywood party scene. We caught up with him to get his ideas about what it takes to spin video—to truly be creative in mixing video and audio to move the crowd, both visually and sonically.

Mobile Beat: As a starter VJ, what's the basic level of gear you'd recommend?

DJ MisterE: Well, being a video DJ requires a little bit more power on a computer than an audio DJ because of the pro-

rate...Serato houses the actual database and the content in regards to where your files are found and neatly organized. Mix Emergency takes the video from Serato, the files that are being played, and applies those to their players with a much stronger output.

M B: Say someone's got a tighter budget. What would you recommend they start with, other than Serato?

DJ ME: I really don't have any other recommendations. I mean, Serato really is the best out there. If you're going to do video DJing, I would strongly advise Serato and Mix Emergency. And if you don't have the budget for that—I mean, that's just the tip of the iceberg. If you don't have the budget to have Serato, to have these powerful programs to efficiently mix video, I really don't see any reason to keep going.

There are other programs on the market, but I really don't endorse any of them because I've tested them and I don't think that -- they really can't hold the video as strong as Serato and Mix Emergency can.

M B: Okay, what about sampling from movies, TV clips, stuff like that? Is that something you do regularly? Give us the 411 on that.

DJ ME: Sure. Creative expression is very important as a video DJ. Playing clips from many different mediums and

sources is a great way to enhance your set. It makes it fun and it ties in a level of recognition with your crowd. So it's always fun to do that. I do that quite often. I make many of my own personal edits using famous movies, TV clips, commercials—whatever can really grab my audience...

M B: So, video DJing requires a lot more prep than audio-only DJing. How much of each set is pre-planned or pre-set?

DJ ME: Well, my actual set as a whole, in regards to what track I'm going to play after the next isn't so much set. But my actual edits are.

I put a lot of time and a lot of detail into my edits to give my crowd a visual experience that is more creative and more unique than every other video DJ they may see.

cessing of the videos. So you want to make sure that your laptop is equipped with the best possible processing that's available. It's worth the money to have a better processor and more space on your hard drive.

Once you've got that nailed down, Serato literally is the best database platform to house all of your content. And then I highly recommend for all the video DJs to use a program called Mix Emergency, made by Inklen, that enables you to have much more freedom of range to crossover and transition and apply different effects and filters to your video in a live setting.

M B: Okay. Is that a plugin for Serato or is that another app that jumps in between?

DJ ME: It is not a plug-in for Serato. It's completely sepa-



M B: What software are you using to do that work back in the studio?

DJ ME: I use several. The main software I use for the final editing is Final Cut Pro. In my eyes, it's one of the most efficient programs out there. Sony Vegas is another really good program. I know a lot of guys who use it. Personally, I'm a Mac guy, so Final Cut Pro speaks more to me than Vegas does.

I use an abundance of (maybe two or three dozen) other programs to enhance my edits; importing and exporting text or animated files or having to apply different filters or effects.

M B: Comparing and contrasting audio and video DJing, how similar is video beatmixing to audio, in terms of moving the crowd? Are there things you have to "unlearn" as a VJ, or is it just adding new "tools" to the toolkit?

DJ ME: Well, being an audio DJ first is 100 percent mandatory. You have to be able to mix tracks, whether you're playing audio or video. And going from being an audio DJ to being a video DJ, you definitely have a more keen sense of what's going on with your visual content as well. But mixing audio is really the foundation to being a DJ. Whether there's a video feed to not, you still have to provide an enjoyable audible experience for your crowd.

M B: Okay. So there's just a whole other dimension that you have to keep track of?

DJ ME: Yeah. There's an entire other dimension...But at the end of the day, you're still mixing audio together and there just happens to be a video file along with it that you want to make sure that is brought in correctly. And that's the addition of knowing your visual transitions.

There are several ways to do a visual transition. One is to apply a real-time transition where there's blending of some sort, whatever effect/transition you're using. Another way to transition your video while mixing audio is to not have any type of transition on, and at any given time you hit one trigger or button to transition the video so it's a smooth fade from one video to the next.

M B: Back to the source content that you get, you are obviously pulling stuff from movies, all that kind of stuff. Getting into Smashvidz, how important is it to have the videos in the right neighborhood to be able to work with?

DJ ME: Well, it's very important. Luckily, the record labels have been open to the promotional distribution of their content altered in a way that is friendly to DJs. And that's why we created Smashvidz, to take that level of commitment to have video intros, outros, shorter versions, a cappella versions, remixes, transitions—all of these key elements that we take for granted as audio DJs, video DJs need them as well. And they need them at high quality to make sure their crowds are happy with the content that they're seeing....What we do at Smashvidz is provide that source content at a very affordable price and very easily downloadable formats

M B: Smashvidz is subscription-based, correct? Users can choose from the different formats based on how they expect to use the video.

DJ ME: Yes...once you're in our database you have access to the entire library of our content. And each track is listed with all of the different versions, clean and dirty if available, and easy to click and download right to your downloads folder.

M B: If readers want to find out more about your DJing exploits or Smashvidz, where do they need go?

DJ ME: Well, if they want to find out more about the things that I'm doing, my personal website is DJMisterE.com. And Smashvidz.com is obviously Smashvidz.com.

M B: Is there anything else video DJ-related you want to touch on?

DJ ME: Yes, I'd like to touch on the Mixing Lab, which is the most-watched video DJ webcast out there, and it's every week on Tuesdays from 7:00 PM to 12:00 AM, Pacific, 10:00 PM to 3:00 AM, Eastern. (You can also find great content on the site at any time.) And it has the largest demographic of video DJs congregating in one central location each and every week to watch new music videos, old music videos, and talk shop. It's an online video DJ community that I've created.

I bring in guest video DJs every single week, so there's always a new video DJ showing their own personal edits or their style of video mixing. It's an absolutely intriguing thing how big it's gotten. We average 20,000 to 25,000 worldwide viewers every week.

M B: So people can watch, but also interact and learn new techniques by seeing the VJs work their material. How did this concept develop?

DJ ME: Well, the video DJ conference grew out of the fact that I'd been doing this for almost two decades, and I was sick and tired of conventions and expos where they're solely focused on vendors trying to sell you stuff. The actual seminars and stuff have really been lacking over the last several years, and I just wanted to create something that really focused in on video DJs.

There's so many guys out there that don't get the opportunity to get the correct knowledge on how to expand their career and really take it to the next level...There's just nobody out there giving that knowledge away, and I wanted to do that for the video DJ world.

I'm very passionate about video DJs. [I don't want it to] turn into something where...there's a bunch of guys who just buy a laptop, download a library, and say, hey, I can DJ for \$200 or even less. Video DJs, if they have the right knowledge, can be much more valuable than an audio-only DJ. **ME**



Are You Ready, Get Set...

THE REAL INTRO TO COMPUTER DJING

J. RICHARD ROBERTS •

Most often, the educational material for DJs is—to put it bluntly—beginner level. Some titles touch upon more advanced material, however the bulk of the information is set up for those who are new to the business. Helpfully, in *The Laptop DJ Handbook* by Jason Emsley, both worlds are covered, and then some.

GOOD INFO...

The book begins with a brief synopsis of the history of laptop and digital DJing, before segueing into the evolution, culture, and concepts behind what is now the number-one form of playback for DJs. What is extremely refreshing is that Emsley uses regular terms and makes the book palatable for those of us who weren't computer science majors, all the while achieving the book's purpose of conveying the important ideas of computer DJing.

The gear section of the book is quite meaty, with ideas, tips, and a run-through of different pieces of software, hardware, and connectivity. As with the first section, the ideas are presented rationally and in a way that explains not only how to connect the pieces, but why they are needed and also if they are worth the money.

The Laptop DJ Handbook also covers hard drive devices and controllers (HD devices), which are gaining popularity in both the mobile and club markets.

...AND PRACTICAL HELP

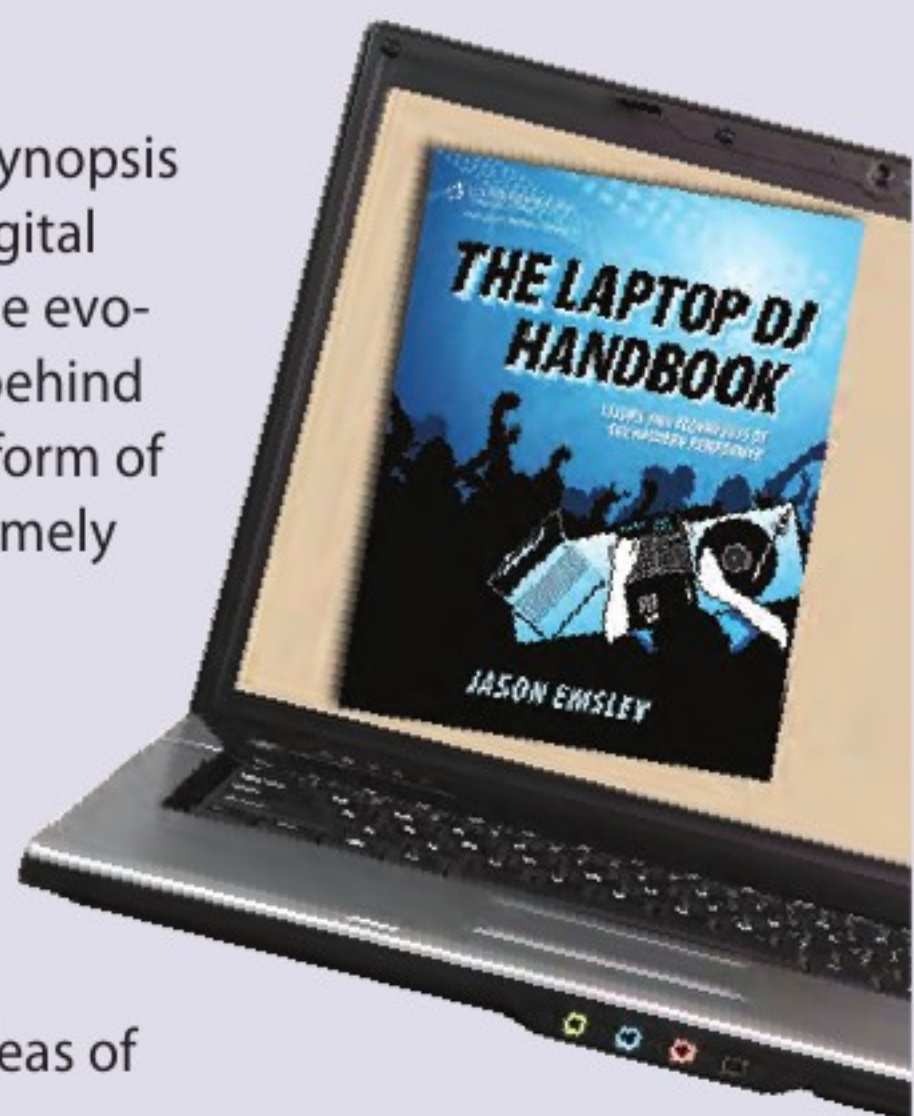
The second portion of the book is almost like a workbook, complete with intro sections for (among others) Serato and Ableton Live. This section is especially helpful for actually figuring out how to work the products. This book is not a superficial piece designed only to pique the interest of those wanting to get into the digital DJing field.

THOUGHTS, ACTIONS

Having been involved in the world of digital DJing for a good many years (almost since its adolescent/pre-teen years; it is now a college student), even I learned a lot from this book. If it were a movie, it would be like a new-school Disney film, where not only do the kids (new DJs) get a kick out of it, but the parents find excellent tidbits in there, too.

This book should be in any digital single-op's or multi-op's library for employees and DJ training. The information presented in *The Laptop DJ Handbook* will, like a good map, lead you (and your employees) where you want to go. It might make your arduous journey into successful computer DJing a little easier.

(Available at Amazon.com and elsewhere, list price, \$29.99.) **MB**



Building Your

As an 18-year veteran in multi-op mobile DJ service management, my company has enjoyed much success in the Des Moines, Iowa area. Back in 1993, when two of our junior highs who had previously run their dances together decided to have dances separately, I knew I couldn't let another DJ service get in the door with one of them while I was performing at the other. It was time to expand.

I bought the sound gear (no lighting in the BCP DJ show back then), signed up for Columbia House and BMG Music club about 20 times each to build the second CD library and had my assistant start doing his own events.

We quickly expanded into a third, and then a fourth system, within a year or two. By the mid-'90s, we were doing three or four parties per night, every Friday and Saturday night at area schools and college campuses. Back then we promoted ourselves as the \$150 DJ service. And boy were we busy!

Fast-forward to now, and we have four or five DJ shows rolling out on Fridays and Saturdays and our average charge for events is \$850 to \$900. We have concert-level sound and lighting that we can do at multiple events at one time. I've personally cut back to only a gig or two every month and Jake Feldman (MB gear editor, MBLV production manager, and MB Tour director) runs the multi-op with a great bunch of guys as his staff.

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

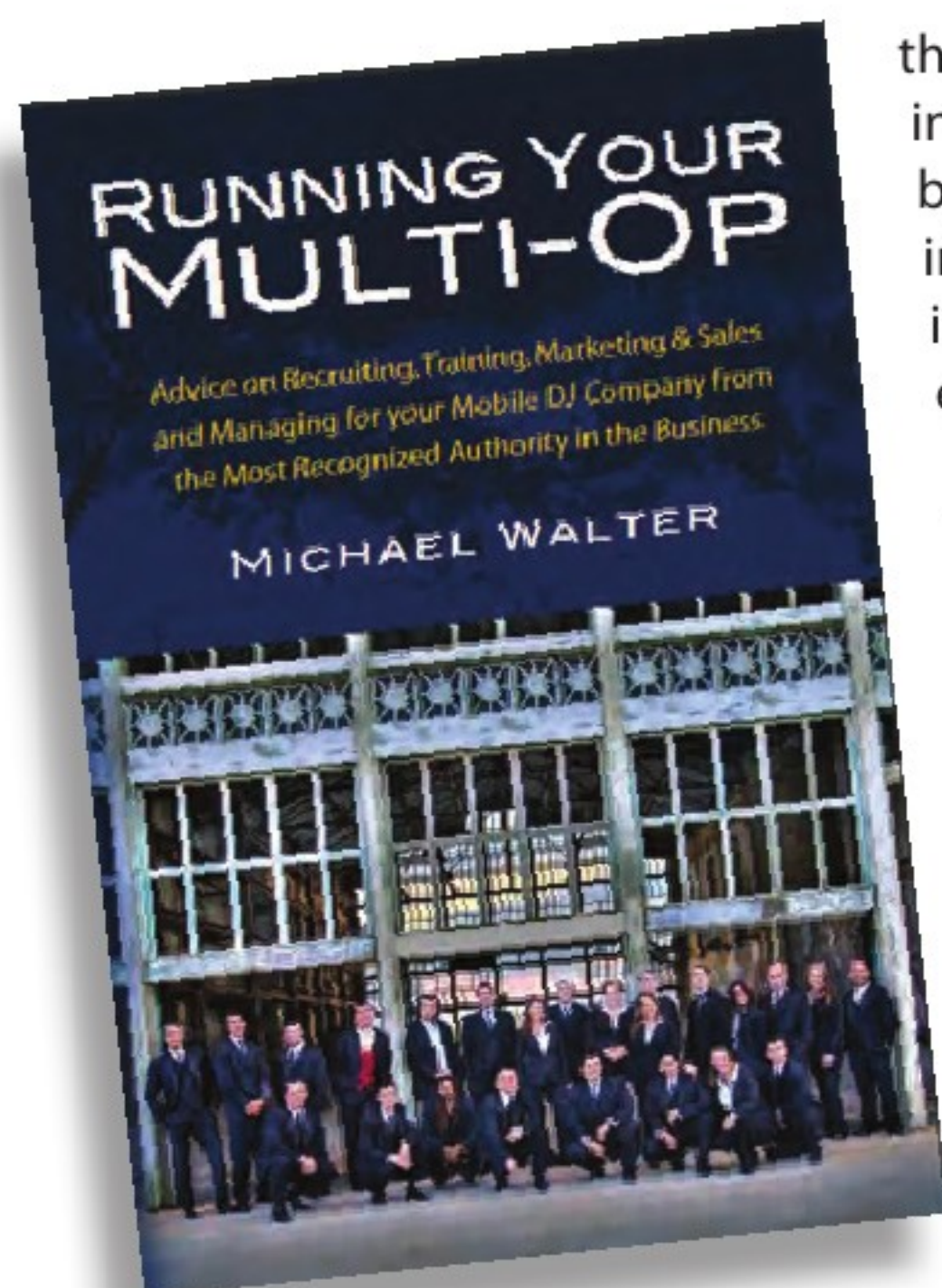
As an attendee running a multi-op company, my first Mobile Beat DJ Show showed me that we had been doing pretty well for little ole Des Moines, Iowa. But I still had a lot to learn from other successful companies. Later on, one of my major resources for building a great multi-op staff became Michael Walter of Elite Entertainment in New Jersey. Mike has trained a whole bunch of DJs during his now two decades in the business, and has helped them bring out the best they have to offer. Fortunately for the rest of us, he has distilled a lot of his knowledge and his practical techniques into seminars, DVDs, and now a book called *Running Your Multi-Op*.

Jake and I have each read this book from cover to cover and are now going back and reviewing parts of it to determine what we are going to integrate into our company's operations. The first step for us was coming up with company rules. Jake has worked with a number of Mike's suggestions, putting the company rules down on paper and deciding how often they would be reviewed with the staff. He debuted

A-Team

HOW TO MAXIMIZE YOUR MULTI-OP DJ SERVICE

BY RYAN BURGER AND JAKE FELDMAN •



those rules as the second step in the improvement process, by setting regular meetings for the DJs and making it clear that attendance is essential.

We were happy to find that we were already doing a lot of what Mike discusses, and it was reassuring to know we were on the same path as other successful mobile DJ companies such like Mike's.

The book is subtitled *Advice on Recruiting, Training, Marketing and*

Sales and Managing for Your Mobile DJ Company from the Most Recognized Authority in the Business. A big claim, but Mike covers all these topics well. Especially in the training and employee management area, he provides a good depth of info to help with managing multiple DJs.

Mike Walter gets all his information across with wit and an

My mom used to tell me, "Being smart doesn't mean you have all the answers. It just means you have to know how to find them." (p. 107)

enjoyable writing style. I would recommend *Running Your Multi-Op* to anyone looking to improve a current multiple system situation, or someone considering expanding. This is a find that is well worth its \$25 price tag.

Check out www.trainingyournextgreatdj.com for more information and to see a sample of the book. **MB**

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An excerpt from the book
*Clear! The Simple Guide to Keeping Your
Business Alive and Kicking*

Humans are naturally inclined toward exaggeration when in competitive scenarios.

One needn't look any further than any online dating service for evidence of this principle. Men who are 5 feet 10 inches cease to exist in this online reality, as most opt to round the statistic up to 6 feet. (OkCupid estimates that almost all men under 6 feet tall exaggerate their height, and 80% of men exaggerate their income.) Couch potatoes boast athletic builds, and alcoholics become "social drinkers." The fact is, when given the opportunity to describe ourselves we tend to give ourselves

Just like our online dating example, being disingenuous will only get you so far. Eventually you actually have to show up at the bar and meet your date. Over-promising and under-delivering is one of the worst things any business or individual can do in this new economy. A disappointed customer has a much larger reach than in the past, and dissemination of information is lightning fast. Individuals who feel they have been a victim of "false advertising" can go to the web and call your company out on online forums, negatively impacting thousands of potential customers.

But don't worry, it isn't all gloom and doom. The good news is that the opposite also holds true. Fortunately for businesses that remain authentic, a crowded and highly competitive marketplace has persuaded many businesses to resort to hyperbole and half-truths—so much so

business must take to thrive in this new economy is to be realistic about your strengths and weaknesses. If you have trouble identifying your problems, go online and see what your customers are saying about you. Relax. Be open-minded. Often when people go online to vent, they tend not to phrase their criticism very constructively. Sometimes this makes it easy to just dismiss their comment. But it is important to consider every comment. Look past the words to find any patterns or anomalies. Then really work to make the changes your customer base wants (as long as they are in line with your brand).

I recently read some scathing reviews on Hotels.com. What impressed me was that the manager had taken the time to address each complaint in a very real and professional way. He admitted what was wrong and pledged to fix it. He asked

A disappointed customer has a much larger reach than in the past, and dissemination of information is lightning fast.

the benefit of the doubt.

The same holds true for businesses when it comes to marketing. We tend to overlook our shortcomings and exaggerate our strengths. However, in a world that is overflowing with choices and competition, these little white lies can be very damaging to you and/or your company's reputation. Whereas being fully honest and up front (even pointing out a couple of flaws) can really help set your business apart among your exaggerating competitors.

that when a company is the "real deal," it instantly becomes a breath of fresh air.

Customers are quick to rally behind authentic and genuine individuals and companies. That same energy that will send people online to complain about your company can easily be switched to get people to go online and sing your praises.

Delivering on what you promise, and exceeding expectations, will easily translate to smitten customers advising their social network to frequent your business.

A difficult but essential step every

the customers to give his hotel another chance to make it right, and to ask for him personally the next time they came to stay.

He was real. He was authentic. And even though the product may have had some flaws, I expect the customers will probably give the hotel another chance.

Avis touted that it was number two and "We Try Harder." Volkswagen launched the "Think Small" campaign that resulted in the success of the Beetle. Being honest and real worked.

For the mobile entertainment world, this is critical. Play to your talents. If you don't have a lot of experience let clients know that smaller venues are your specialty. If you do have a lot of experience, make sure you tout your successes honestly and name drop carefully; it's a much smaller world and one miscommunication could cost you a gig. Remember that every event is an opportunity to create more business. Be real, be you, and play to your talents. **ME**

Clear takeaway: Write down three flaws, bumps or bruises your company or product has. How can you weave them into positive discussion points in your marketing?



Steve Brazell is one of America's top marketing and branding experts. He helps Fortune 500s, start-ups, small-caps, celebrities, and individuals make more money by communicating their brand stories better. Some of his clients include; IBM, Wingate, Century 21, Kevin Costner, Coldwell Banker, Keyshawn Johnson, Warner Brothers and Walt Disney.

He is the founder of Hitman, Inc., a Competition Removal™ firm with offices in New York and Vegas, and the author of Clear! The Simple Guide to Keeping Your Business Alive and Kicking.

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Joe Race
Showtime Atlanta - Georgia

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*Half price sale lasts until September 30, 2011. No power tools were harmed in the making of this ad.



Best DJ Websites: 2011

OUR RESIDENT WEB-HEAD ROUNDS UP SOME EXCELLENT ENTERTAINER SITES

BY JIM WEISZ •

Take a moment to think about the last time you needed to find a business in your area. Where did you go to find someone? I'm going to bet it wasn't the Yellow Pages and that you didn't call 411.

More than likely, you did your search online. We are so connected to the Web, that whether it's from your computer, tablet or smartphone, the quickest way to find just about anything these days is online.

So, it makes sense that event planners all over the world are looking for all their vendors online. Whether you are a wedding or school DJ, or you offer your services for all types of parties, there's a good chance a prospective client will find you through your website. For those leads that are directed to your website, they will make their initial impression about your company based on your website.

Consumers these days are impatient. If they are on your website

submitted their websites for public scrutiny. Unfortunately, if I had to come up with a quick statistic, I'd have to say that over 90% of the websites submitted were bad. And by bad, I mean *really* bad.

Am I just overly picky on what I think is a good website? Perhaps. But, I think the answer lies more in the amount of time and money most small businesses allocate to their website construction and upkeep. Your website is always on (or at least it should be). Seven days a week, 365 days a year, your website is working for you. Even if you're sleeping, your website is working for you. Considering what a powerful business tool you have at your disposal, it is important to allocate the time and money necessary to have an amazing website.

How do you get that elusive "great website?" It isn't a trick question, and for most it's a simple answer: Hire a professional to design your website. As DJs, we gripe about people who hire their cousin to DJ their event, just because he has some speakers and an iPod. Likewise, don't hire your cousin to design your website just because they took a website design class in college.

With all that said, there are some exceptions to the rule. For example, I know that several of the websites that will be mentioned in this article were designed by the DJ. That shows it's not impossible to have a nice looking website that you design yourself, or have your cousin design. But if you, or your cousin, don't really have graphic design skills on par with the professionals, fork over the cash and hire a pro. The return-on-investment will be well worth it.

JUDGING & WINNERS

Over the course of a few weeks, I posted on the MobileBeat.Com forums, Facebook and several other DJ websites to solicit entries. The response was good, with over 200 DJ companies submitting their websites to the contest.

It was very difficult to pick the winners. The first step was to whittle the list from 200 down to about 30. From there, the list was cut in half and the top five were selected, along with 10 honorable mentions. If you submitted your website and are surprised you didn't make the cut, either you're like one of those people on American Idol who don't know they're a bad singer, or it might've been something small, like pages that said "under construction" that bumped you in favor of a slightly better contender. In fact, there were several very good websites that made the first round of cuts, but they had pages that were under construction, which pulled the overall excellence of the site down a notch. (Then there was that great-looking site that, upon launching, had music blaring—"Macarena," of all songs. Sheesh.)

The top five winners will be receiving prizes from a few vendors who donated prizes. Thanks to those vendors: Mobile Beat Magazine, DJ Crash Course, DJ Intelligence, PartyBlast.com and PrimeCuts. Thank you also to all the DJ companies who entered the contest. We're hoping to make this an annual contest, so if you aren't a winner, now is a great time to start planning what you need to do to put your website in contention next year!

So, without further ado, the winners are...



and can't find what they're looking for, or it just doesn't appeal to them, they'll move on. Over the years, there have been countless studies that show people make their decision about a particular website within just a few seconds. If you only have a few seconds to capture their attention, you'd better make sure to make it count. How can you do that? With a website that truly reflects the image of your company that you want to portray to prospective clients.

BACKGROUND

I have been writing website articles for Mobile Beat magazine and MobileBeat.Com for over eight years now. During that time, I have looked at hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of DJ websites. For years, I solicited offers for DJs to submit their URLs for a Simon Cowell-like critique of their websites. Hundreds of brave DJs have

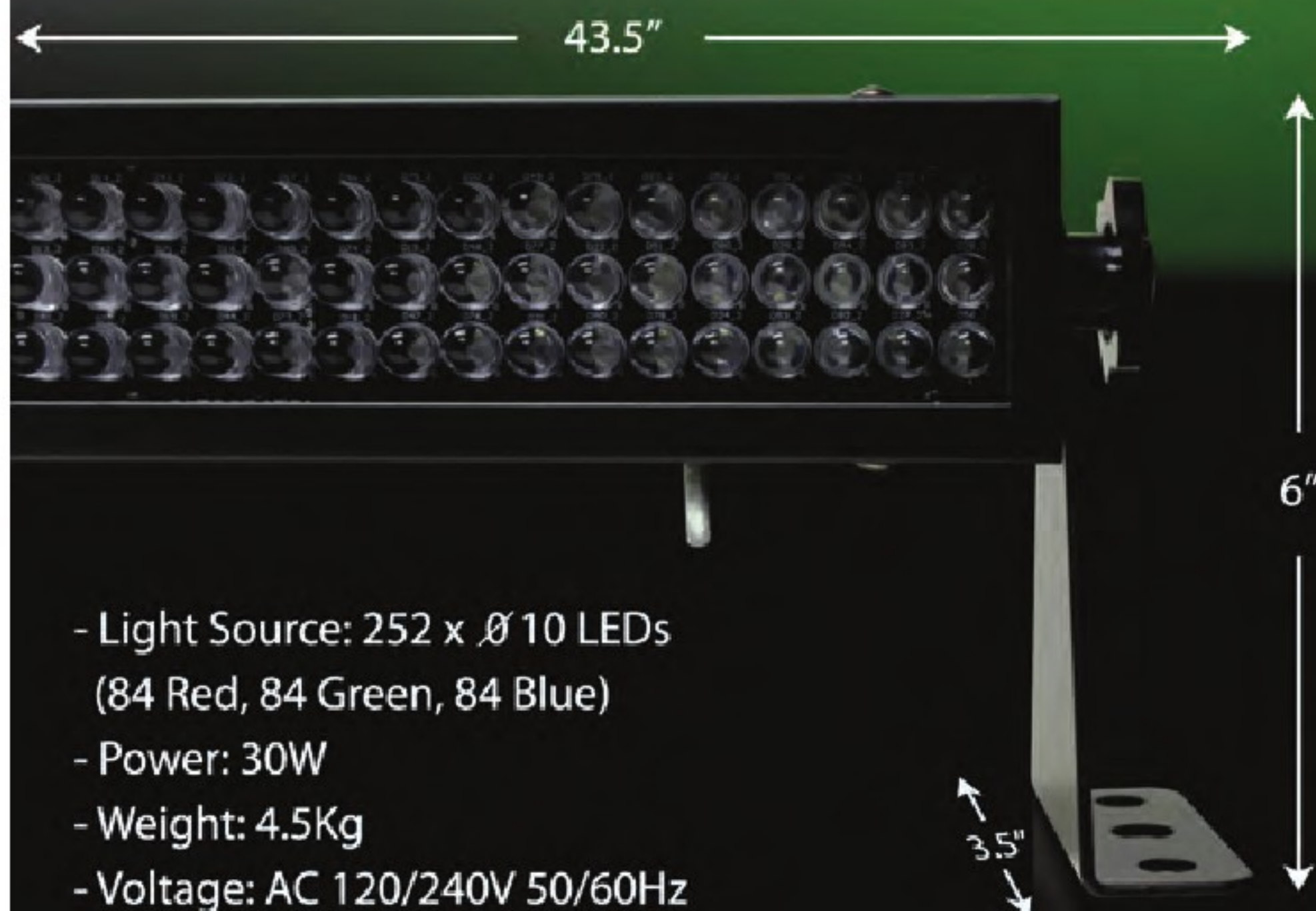


Jim Weisz has been a DJ since 1999, primarily serving the wedding and school markets. Originally from Chicago, he relocated his thriving DJ business to Dallas in 2003. He used his company's web presence to effectively to re-establish his client base within a just a few months. Jim is a seminar speaker and also writes for MobileBeat.com on web issues. He can be reached at jim@discoverydjs.com.

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Best Overall Website

Operation Get Down DJs

www.chicagoweddingdj.org

This website has a great look and feel to it, especially for the wedding market. Those with a good knowledge of websites will recognize that it is a Wordpress website. However, the website is designed so well that it doesn't look like a Wordpress site. Nice pictures and good use of colors that appeal to the wedding market really stand out. While there is a ton of great content on this website, it doesn't feel overly busy. In addition to all the written content, there is also a "Jam Cam" video for every wedding. There are calls-to-action all over the website, which is great for converting someone just checking out your website into a lead. Not only does this website look great, but it also includes many features to help its search engine ranking. Everything this website has going for it makes it the 2011 Top DJ website.



Best Use of Video

Elegant Affairs

www.elegantaffairsdj.com

I'm usually against music or videos that start when a website loads. However, the video on the Elegant Affairs homepage is different. It is a very inviting video, with an introduction from the owner of the company. It seems well produced and is very short, at less than a minute long. In addition to the intro video, there is also a video for each part of the wedding reception. This is meant to help prospective clients to decide what services they would like from Elegant Affairs and what special events they want to take place throughout the night. It is a very unique concept. Another nice touch is a "behind the scenes" video with the owner. Overall, all the videos feel very personal and welcoming.

Best Blog

Schiemer Entertainment Services

www.schiemerentertainment.com

Using a unique approach, the homepage for this company is a blog. There is content on the rest of the website, but the home page is almost entirely made up of a blog. Like most DJ blogs, it has pictures from recent events, along with some other little tidbits of information. What makes this stand out is a great overall design of the website, amazing pictures, and a short wrap-up at the end of each wedding blog. Not only does content like this really draw a prospective client in, but it also does wonders for helping your website in the search engines (if done right, which this one is).



Best School Website

A Premier Entertainment

www.4schoolsonly.com

This website does a great job of appealing to students. Good music on the website (again, usually not recommended, but it's great for this target market), videos, pictures—everything is there to sell both the students and faculty on their company. The celeb acts page is a nice touch and adds credibility, showing that A Premier Entertainment can secure well-known artists for their events. Another nice feature is the pages that have information specifically for the teachers or students visiting the website. That way, whoever is planning the school function can get the information they need that is targeted to them.



Best Website Tools Integration

Kingdom DJ Productions

www.kingdomdjproductions.com

It has become the standard to have planning tools on your DJ website. The Kingdom DJ Productions website does a great job of integrating their website tools as well as offering tips and information about their website tools. They have a nice page called "client area benefits," which sells the client on why having a place to go online to plan their event is convenient. There is also a "5 easy steps page," which walks the prospect through the online booking process—from checking availability all the way through setting up a client login.



Honorable Mention: These 10 websites all just missed the cut for one of the top spots, but deserve an honorable mention for having a website worthy of being included with the top DJ websites.

Elite Entertainment

www.elitedj.com



Music Maestro! DJ Service

www.musicmaestrodj.com



Entertainment Solutions

www.esdj.com



SJ's Disc Jockey

www.sjsdiscjockey.com



Houserockers DJ

www.houserockersdj.com



Spencer Weddings

www.spencerweddings.com



Joe Bunn DJ Company

www.bunndjcompany.com



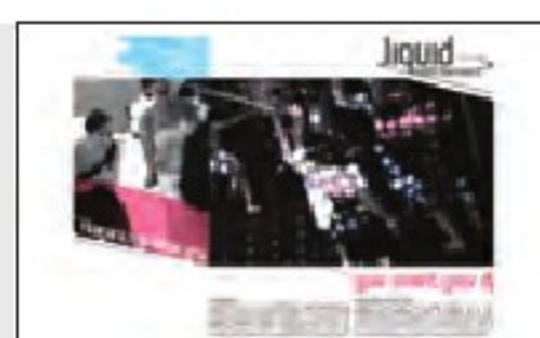
The Music Caterer

www.music-caterer.com



Liquid Entertainment

www.liquidentertainment.ca



Unlimited Sounds

www.unlimitedsounds.com





Teacher Appreciation Day

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR ENTERTAINMENT AND PROMOTION

BY JAY MAXWELL •

If you were asked to guess what day it was if there were at least a hundred shoppers waiting outside a store for the door to open, you would probably say the day after Thanksgiving. After all, “Black Friday” promises great sales and early bird specials on Christmas shopping. This article, however, is not about that particular wild and crazy shopping day,

but about another special annual shopping event that takes place at my favorite office supply store, just a few days before the new school year begins. The day (actually just three hours of special bargains) is just for school teachers, and it’s called Teacher Appreciation Day. From the moment the doors open and teachers excitedly enter the building, until the sale is over at noon, teachers know that they will save more money on the supplies they need than at any other time during the summer. It’s ample motivation to brave the crowd and fill up a cart with paper, notebooks, pens, or even a new laptop.

Though this is an annual event, it was only last year—four days *after* the 2010 event—that I first found out about it, as the manager told me that I should have been there to join in the excitement. At first, I thought since he knew that I was also a college professor, that he wanted me to be there with the other teachers to take advantage of the sales.

REACHING THE TEACHERS

However, he continued to explain that he wanted to raise the bar of the event each year with more and more excitement, so that the teachers would see it as more than just another day of shopping. So, a year in advance, I reserved the date for him for the following year.

One of the things you are probably wondering is what fee I charged to do this event? The answer will surprise you: I didn’t charge anything. In fact, I viewed it much like a bridal fair, where the vendor pays the host for the privilege of being there and hopefully gaining more clients. In this setting, my hope was to gain additional exposure to the teachers who might be on a committee to select a DJ for school functions like proms, formals, or monthly dances. And of course there was always the possibility that a shopping teacher might be engaged and looking reception entertainment. The trade was my services for free advertising. This was clearly mutually beneficial the store and my business.

My assumption was that I would play music from the back of the store, out of the way of most everything. Much to my surprise, the manager instead placed me in the front of the store where every teacher could immediately see and hear me as they entered. There was no avoiding me since my booth was adjacent to the table where every teacher had to place a registration card in a box for prize drawings. The store planned for about four hundred teachers, but in the end nearly five hundred strolled through the doors...and many picked up a business card from my table as they walked by.

SCHOOLHOUSE ROCK?

When I learned about my strategic placement two weeks prior to the event, I changed my musical concept for the day. At first, it was going to be just background music, but once I learned that the event needed to be more of a show, my selection of music changed appropriately.

There were several criteria that I set for adding tracks to my play list. It had to be a fun song since I was determined not to play any slow tunes during the entire morning. My vision was to have every teacher’s head bobbing, feet tapping, and perhaps their lips singing out loud to the music as they shopped. There also had to be a wide variety, since I wanted the music to be familiar to everyone. The pattern was generally one new song followed by a pair of older songs. This would serve two purposes. It would be great music for every age in the store, and would also show that we had the latest songs for school dances. The music naturally had to be very clean with nothing suggestive played that might dissuade someone from hiring us for their youth. Finally, there was an ample sprinkling of summertime songs like “Surfin’ USA,” “Soak Up the Sun,” and the like, to give it an end-of-summer party feel. The 80 songs on this issue’s list are by no means the only songs that I would recommend, but they all fit the above criteria. In hindsight, this list was almost twice as long as I needed since much of the time was spent with making announcements, running contests and giving away prizes.

GETTING THE POINT ACROSS

To make life easy, I pre-programmed all the songs in the order that they were going to be played so I could concentrate on the MCing part of the event. My job that morning was two-fold. While entertaining the crowd, it was also my task to promote the store’s specials and the items that other vendors were giving away. There were over a dozen outside vendors, mostly lined up in the back of the store, who were also there to show their appreciation for the teachers with specials that day. Several times each hour I would pause and draw a name from the box or make up a quick contest in order to give away one of the vendors’ prizes. The manager also told me to promote my company as much as possible to drum up business for my company. Clearly, with that free reign, I came up with some cute ways to both promote my business and give away prizes. For example, when it was time to give away a free haircut certificate from one of the vendors there, my challenge to the store crowd was that the first teacher to come to my table who had re-



Mobile Beat’s resident musicologist since 1992 (issue #11), Jay Maxwell runs the multi-talent entertainment company, Jay Maxwell’s Music by Request, LLC, in Charleston, South Carolina. He is also a professor of Business at Charleston Southern University. His passion for detail and continuous research of clients’ requests can be found not only in this column, but also in his annually updated music guide, *Play Something We Can Dance To*.

An Engaging Goodbye to Summer

SONG	ARTIST	SONG	ARTIST
1 BOOGIE SHOES	K.C. & THE SUNSHINE BAND	41 THE WAY I AM	INGRID MICHAELSON
2 MUSTANG SALLY	WILSON PICKETT	42 THIS OLD HEART OF MINE	ISLEY BROTHERS
3 SINGLE LADIES	BEYONCE	43 SOAK UP THE SUN	SHERYL CROW
4 BUILD ME UP BUTTERCUP	THE FOUNDATIONS	44 CALIFORNIA GIRLS	BEACH BOYS
5 BROWN EYED GIRL	VAN MORRISON	45 STUCK LIKE GLUE	SUGARLAND
6 SAY HEY (I LOVE YOU)	MICHAEL FRANTI	46 I CAN SEE CLEARLY NOW	JOHNNY NASH
7 MARGARITAVILLE	JIMMY BUFFETT	47 GET DOWN TONIGHT	K.C. & THE SUNSHINE BAND
8 ABC	JACKSON 5	48 SOME KIND OF WONDERFUL	JOSS STONE
9 CHICKEN FRIED	ZAC BROWN BAND	49 ALL SUMMER LONG	KID ROCK
10 DON'T STOP TIL YOU GET ENOUGH	MICHAEL JACKSON	50 WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN	KENNY CHESNEY & UNCLE KRACKER
11 GOT TO GET YOU INTO MY LIFE	THE BEATLES	51 YOUR MAMA DON'T DANCE	LOGGINS & MESSINA
12 DYNAMITE	TAIO CRUZ	52 JUST THE WAY YOU ARE	BRUNO MARS
13 THE TIDE IS HIGH	BLONDIE	53 HEAT WAVE	LINDA RONSTADT
14 UPTOWN GIRL	BILLY JOEL	54 CELEBRATION	KOOL & THE GANG
15 THE LAZY SONG	BRUNO MARS	55 SOUND OF SUNSHINE	MICHAEL FRANTI
16 SEPTEMBER	EARTH, WIND, & FIRE	56 CECILIA	SIMON & GARFUNKEL
17 SURFIN' USA	THE BEACH BOYS	57 HOW SWEET IT IS	MARVIN GAYE
18 DJ GOT US FALLIN' IN LOVE	USHER / PITBULL	58 LOVE STORY	TAYLOR SWIFT
19 WALK LIKE AN EGYPTIAN	THE BANGLES	59 SIGNED, SEALED, DELIVERED	STEVIE WONDER
20 DO YOU BELIEVE IN MAGIC	ALY & A.J.	60 I'M A BELIEVER	MONKEES
21 HAVEN'T MET YOU YET	MICHAEL BUBLE	61 HEY, SOUL SISTER	TRAIN
22 CHATTAHOOCHEE	ALAN JACKSON	62 IN THE SUMMERTIME	MUNGO JERRY
23 TWIST AND SHOUT	THE BEATLES	63 YOU CAN'T HURRY LOVE	PHIL COLLINS
24 ALL-AMERICAN GIRL	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	64 I'M YOURS	JASON MRAZ
25 I GOTTA FEELING	BLACK EYED PEAS	65 MAN! I FEEL LIKE A WOMAN	SHANIA TWAIN
26 FAITH	GEORGE MICHAEL	66 RASPBERRY BERET	PRINCE
27 CALIFORNIA GIRLS	DAVID LEE ROTH	67 CLOSER	NE-YO
28 FOREVER	CHRIS BROWN	68 CRAZY LITTLE THING CALLED LOVE	PHIL COLLINS
29 I SAY A LITTLE PRAYER	DIANA KING	69 LIFE IS A HIGHWAY	RASCAL FLATTS
30 DANCING IN THE MOONLIGHT	TOPLOADER	70 TOES	ZAC BROWN BAND
31 YOU CAN CALL ME AL	PAUL SIMON	71 NEVER GONNA GIVE YOU UP	RICK ASTLEY
32 LUCKY	JASON MRAZ / COLBIE CAILLAT	72 SMOOTH	SANTANA
33 CROCODILE ROCK	ELTON JOHN	73 ROUND & ROUND	SELENA GOMEZ
34 BEACH BABY	FIRST CLASS	74 MORE TODAY THAN YESTERDAY	SPIRAL STAIRCASE
35 FIREWORK	KATY PERRY	75 DANCING ON THE CEILING	LIONEL RICHIE
36 I CAN'T HELP MYSELF	FOUR TOPS	76 TODAY WAS A FAIRY TALE	TAYLOR SWIFT
37 JACK AND DIANE	JOHN MELLENCAMP	77 I SECOND THAT EMOTION	SMOKEY ROBINSON
38 CRAZY	GNARLS BARKLEY	78 DOMINO	VAN MORRISON
39 UPSIDE DOWN	JACK JOHNSON	79 POCKETFUL OF SUNSHINE	NATASHA BEDINGFIELD
40 WE GOT THE BEAT	GO-GO'S	80 ME AND JULIO DOWN BY THE SCHOOLYARD	PAUL SIMON

cently got engaged would receive the prize. This in turn gave me the chance to promote the fact that my company specializes in wedding receptions, "...so call us not only for your next school function but also if you or a friend has recently become engaged!"

By all indications, it was a successful morning. I saw a number of teachers toe-tapping and shuffling to the beat down the aisles and while waiting in the checkout lines. The manager was so pleased with the added excitement that I was adding, that

halfway through the event he came over to make sure that I would be there next year. Even after thirty years in the mobile DJ business, it never ceases to amaze me that I can find new and unique ways to promote my business. Hopefully you too can find some fresh opportunities like this to promote your business and maybe also hear someone from your unusual audience yell "Play Something We Can Dance To!" **MB**

Chuck Green Talks Tech

ONE-ON-ONE WITH AMERICAN DJ'S ON-SCREEN GEAR GURU

Chuck Green, known as American DJ's "Under the Hood" guy, has been filling up on audio and video gear knowledge for over a decade. He has made a career of helping DJs and others tune up their rigs to get the best entertainment mileage possible.

He's been with American DJ for about eight years, and before that paid his dues working for several music stores, running DJ departments for a few of them. He's also been a live sound guy for almost 10 years. Whether it's lighting or pro audio, the gear keeps Chuck Green running. Here we'll find out about this industry pro and the highway he's headed down.

Mobile Beat: How did American DJ find you? Or did you find them?

Chuck Green: Well, it's a little bit of both. I've been aware of American DJ forever. I've sold their products in the stores forever. I always thought it would be a neat business to work in. And I was working in a music store about 10 years ago when I met Alfred Gonzalez, our national sales manager. And we got to talking, and I said, "I'd really like to maybe come to LA and work for you guys." And about a year or so later, I got a phone call and I moved right down a couple weeks after that.

M B: Before we started recording you said something about you remember your first American DJ catalog... When you get these colorful catalogs full of gear, it can be like getting the latest Sports Illustrated. Was it that kind of experience for you?

C G: Oh, yeah. It was super-exciting. It was a beautiful full-color catalog. And you'd always just check out the new effects. I mean, the only thing that was more exciting than that was when American DJ came out with a website, which was pretty ahead of their time. They were one of the first companies I ever saw with a website. And then as soon as modem connections got faster,

they had the videos of the products up, and that just made it even cooler.

M B: And now you're the star in a lot of those videos. Tell us a little bit about the "Under the Hood" series that you guys started, what was it, a couple years ago now, right?

C G: Yeah. I was talking to the marketing director, Brian Dowdle, and I'd done a couple of how-to instructional videos on controllers and things along those lines. And we were talking about videos: As a consumer, what would I like to see? And I said, well, if I'm going to invest money, especially in a piece of equipment that I'm going to use to try to make

money, I want to know about it. I want to know how it works.

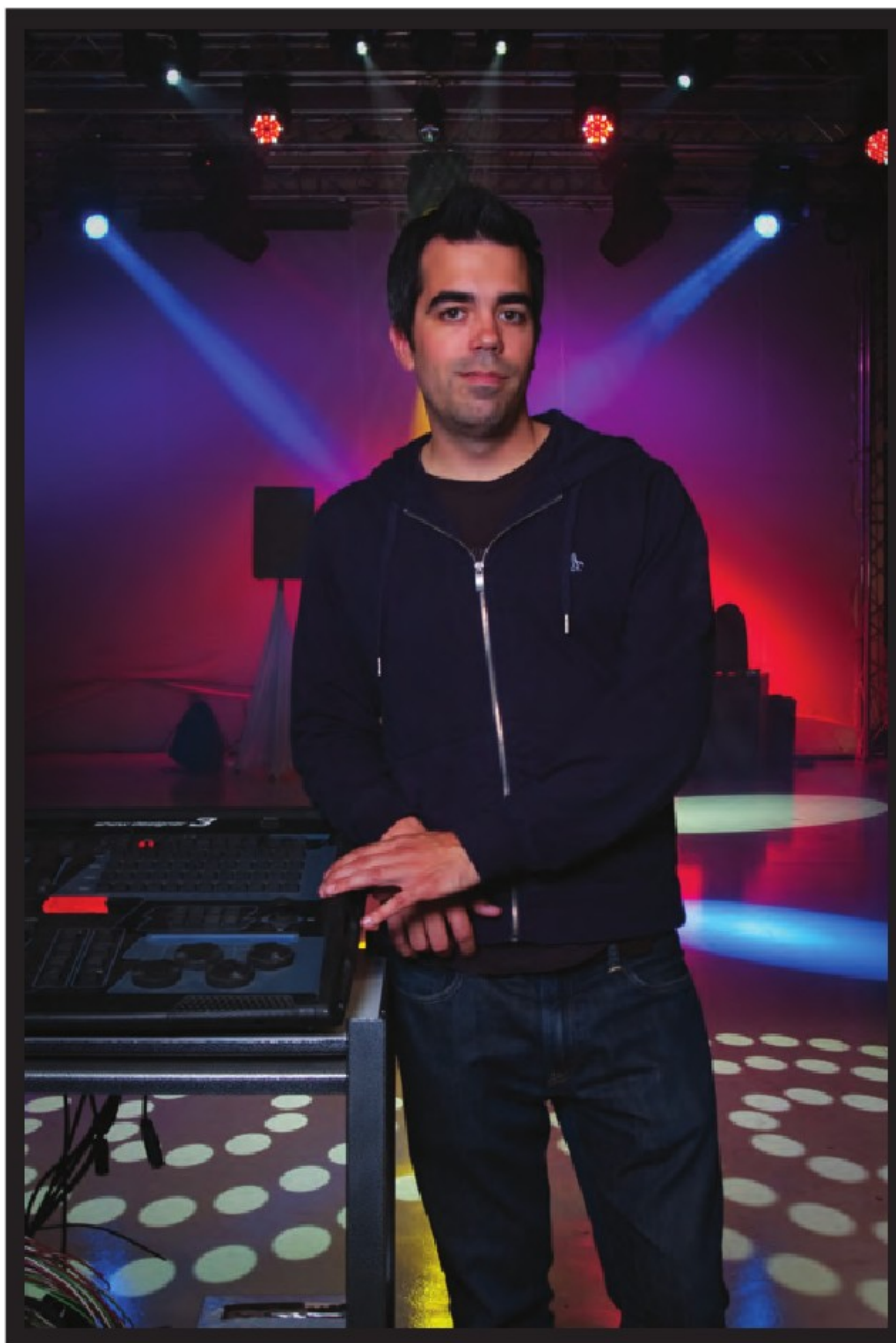
I'm just that kind of guy. When I go buy a car, I know everything about the motor, the transmission, everything, before I get to the dealership. And I know a lot of my pro lighting and audio brethren are the same way. They want to know what they're buying. They don't want to buy it, open it up, and find out if it's a piece of junk or it's not what they thought it was going to be.

So I said, hey, let's give them as close a look as possible. So I went and talked to some of the higher-up executives and asked, is this going to be a problem if I open up the products on camera to show people? And they said, you can go ahead and do whatever you like. We weren't sure what the reaction would be, but it turned out to be really good.

M B: So really you're getting in there, unscrewing everything, going deeper than the average DJ is ever going

to go with the hardware. But you're showing them that this is quality-made hardware, no doubt.

C G: Exactly...We want to show that we actually put thought into it, we put R&D and we source the best quality parts that we can, so we can still make an affordable, reliable product.



And we just kind of want to show that off because a lot of times it's easy to get confused. I mean, you look at a scanner that costs \$1,000 from us and then there's people that'll say, "Well, I saw a scanner for \$400. Why should I pay \$1,000 for your scanner?" And that's what we're trying to show them, the quality of the build from start to finish.

M B: And you seem to definitely have fun doing it...It comes through on camera. It seems like you're aiming for the sweet spot between informative and entertaining.

C G: I guess. I mean, I guess people think I'm kind of entertaining to being with, because I just go on there and do my thing...I've watched so many boring tech and product videos. You want to put a group of people to sleep, put on a product video for a keyboard or something, because it's the most boring video you've ever seen. So I just said, hey, if you're going to let me be myself, I'm happy to do it. And I have the greatest job in the world now.

M B: I know American DJ has been very big on educating the DJs, especially now with the ADJ University. I guess you're a big part of working with Brian Redd and his whole gang. Can you tell us a little bit about the university and where you're going to go with it?

C G: Yeah. I mean, I'm really excited about the ADJ University. I think it's a really cool deal that they're letting us do. Because a lot of the times, people buy these products and they just plug them in and let them go, and I just kind of want to let everybody know that a lot of our products are very versatile and can go as far as you want to go with them, as far as creating different looks and different effects.

A lot of times I want to convey that some of these products are meant to be creative with. They're not just meant to be hung up, although they can be, and you can turn them on and it's simple as that. But I want to get a little more in-depth with what some of these products can do, to help actually increase value to your service, you know? Like creating different color schemes that match the event theme, stuff like that.

So anyway, on the next ADJ University I'm going to go a little bit more into the design aspect and how to achieve certain looks; and especially how to achieve certain looks without having to use 1,500 different fixtures.

American DJ has been really cool about letting us try to educate people and get people to see that these products just do more than just sound active. And we just want to make sure everybody's up on it.

M B: Versatility...like showing how to use one of their lights as a follow spot for the bride's entrance...

C G: Yeah, exactly. And I also want to show people that it's not as intimidating as they think. I talk to a lot of mobile DJs,

and they say, "You know what? I'm just not going to mess with DMX; it's too much." And to me it's funny, because I'm like, "But you're so talented at getting a party going, which seems difficult to me, and the lighting stuff is easy." I want people to not be so intimidated by using DMX and creating their own look.



And you're right. You can get the moving heads to key light different things and spot people. I just want to get everybody doing that and showing a little bit more of their creativity when they do their gig.

M B: So you definitely have a respect for the DJs. But you're more of a technician. You enjoy being in the background. I understand you program the shows for the conventions and fairs and that kind of stuff. You're not an in-the-spotlight-type of guy...

C G: No. I'm not. I mean, I like to think of myself as the ultimate pit crew chief for a DJ. If clearing a dance floor was a talent a DJ would have, I would be an awesome DJ. I've done that. So I have a lot of respect for mobile DJs. And even being a guy with a background playing in a band and stuff, I know how hard it is to keep a crowd moving. And picking the right songs and everything is definitely an art form to itself.

I programmed the tradeshow booth for American DJ. I do a lot of programming and a lot of live sound on the side and on the weekends. And even if I won the lottery tomorrow, I'd continue to do it. I love it. I love this industry.

M B: Is there anything else DJs should be on the lookout for?

C G: I'd say keep an eye on all this cool LED stuff. And just keep up with the technology. Because I've said before: The spin and puke lights have their place at the house parties. But when you're a professional event guy, let's get the DMX moving.

Go to AmericanDJ.com to access ADJ University and "Under the Hood" videos. **MB**

An Industry Icon Reinvents Himself

THE KING OF MITZVAHS CIRCLES BACK TOWARD DJING FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE



People all over the East Coast, but especially the Philadelphia area, have experienced the excitement of his productions. Countless bar and bat mitzvah celebrations have been the best parties possible, thanks to this entertainer. And many DJs across the nation have benefited from his expertise, shared through seminars and party CD compilations of music for specific events. The entertainer's name is Bobby Morganstein.

We sat down with him for a quick chat about where he and the industry he's helped to shape have been, and what the future may hold.

Mobile Beat: Bobby, give us the quick version of how you got into the business and what you've been doing for the last 20-plus years.

Bobby Morganstein: I got into the business because I talked a lot in class, and my teacher had a friend who owned a DJ company and said I'd be perfect for it. So I started back in high school. And I worked through college for this company. Then after college, had a marketing degree; decided I wanted to DJ. I had a marketing degree and realized there's not a whole lot to do out there with a marketing degree.

And people started calling me at my house to do parties, and then I bought myself equipment while working full-time for a marketing company. I started as a sole proprietor for probably the first two or three years. Things started growing; more and more were calling to book work. I added another MC to work with me. I added more DJs; I added dancers; I added props and prizes.

In our market, we were one of the first to come out and do interactive parties back in the early '90s. And from there, we just kept growing and growing, until eventually I didn't have a full-time job and DJing became my full-time job.

M B: So at your high point, what was it, eight to ten bar mitzvahs every weekend, at couple of thousand dollars each? Tell us what things were like five or ten years ago.

B M: About 10 years ago it was very real for us to do—since there weren't many competitors in our market—easily to do seven to ten high-end bar mitzvahs with three to five dancers on each job, with backdrops, staging, lighting for whatever it was back then at the time. And it was on a consistent basis.

It's much different today. Nowadays we may have three or four competitors in the market; now there could be 40 to 50 guys doing bar mitzvahs.

M B: And things dramatically changed for you about five years ago. Tell us a little about your step out and then eventually back in.

B M: Well, I realized that you're really only as good as your owner and what the owner can carry, and the overflow the owner can offer to the guys to work for them. Some companies may be lucky and have one or two guys that can carry themselves and get referrals. We were fortunate to have that over the years.

But I realized that there was only a window where I could get the most value of selling my company. So I put it out there, confidential in our market, and I had three or four parties interested in buying out the Bobby Morganstein name for the DJ market. And eventually we worked out a deal. I sold the DJ division, not my own gigs, but the DJ division. And it was nice for both sides for a while.

And then I had the opportunity to buy the name back and to buy the website and to buy the phone number. And I took advantage of the opportunity. And I just wanted to do things a little different for the future.

M B: Tell us a little bit about how your role has changed.

B M: Well, I had gotten involved in a lot of other areas. I got involved with novelty entertainment. I got involved with lounge furniture. I got involved in a lighting company. And I was offering these products to a lot of my competitors, who I've always stayed very friendly with. So a lot of my business was coming from my competition.

When I had the opportunity to buy the name back, I didn't want to become a big person in the industry. I wanted to be more of a boutique shop so my competitors would still feel comfortable doing business with me. And it's really worked out well. I've stayed friendly with pretty much every competitor in my market. Almost everybody uses one of my products from time to time. So it's really worked out nice.

M B: So you've also made your name nationally as a seminar speaker/expert on mitzvahs, and you also created a series of CDs and DVDs. Tell us a little bit about your impact there.

B M: It's been about 20 years I've been producing. I produced the original disc because we were using albums and 45s 20 years ago. And when things were starting to change to CD, we did not have a lot of music that was available. So I had to bring a band in to record all the Jewish music you would need for a party.

From there, things just kept going. And I produced a lot of novelty music, cocktail music, and now we released our 38th disc this summer for the Mobile Beat summer tour. It's a complete grand entrance to sports themes disc. And we've also released a new video, which is teaching over ten party dances, which is our 13th video release.

M B: You wanted to step back and concentrate on some specialized stuff bit more, do fewer, more selective gigs. How's that working out?

B M: Well, it's varied. That's what I wanted. But we have 30 events going on over the next week. So I didn't quite get exactly what I wanted. But I'm really spread out now. We just invested a lot into an light-up LED dance floor. All the businesses are spread across now. So if maybe the DJing isn't doing real well, it's being picked up by a lot of other businesses

that we have, including our own banquet facilities, called Beat Street and Beat Street Station.

M B: What is your advice for DJs approaching their 40s, who are thinking about what life will be like after bouncing all over the dance floor at middle schools?

B M: Well, just from seeing what's happening in the industry, a lot of guys are diversifying and not just offering DJ services. You know, we also offer event services where we'll bring in an event planner to help us put a party together. Basically, we get the clients in a lot of cases first and we're doing everything we can to keep the client. You know, figure out what their needs are and try to accommodate each part of that if we can.

You need to put a group or team together. You can't do it all yourself. And you need to trust the people that work for you and make sure you hire the right people, so they can do the job the way that you want it done.

So it's really all about diversifying; being able to offer many different options to your clients. Of course, it all revolves around the DJing. You know, I do what I can to help some of the younger guys in our industry. I helped to manage a few companies. I helped to give them input. And a lot of these guys in return rent the services that I offer. So it's a win-win for everybody.

M B: What do you plan on doing for the next five to ten years?

B M: I just think for the future—I love performing. I just think that my personal parties are going to get more and more creative, trying to always introduce the newest technology to my clients, first in the industry. I want to spend a lot of the time in just training one or two, maybe three guys that are just going to do a great job and take a lot of the stress off me, and not have to worry about them. So getting some extra time with training.

And then, just keep growing all the other divisions that we're into, so hopefully with those divisions, if there is no DJ job on the weekend, then we still have ten events going on from the various businesses that we're into. So that's what I see for my future: just getting more and more involved in management, the expansion of other businesses that relate to the bar mitzvah business, and to just keep taking it to the next level. **MB**





Hammer: Way Beyond the Hype

Like many successful artists from previous decades, Hammer is known to many only as the rapper dancing in the big pants, with hits like “U Can’t Touch This” and “Too Legit to Quit” from the 1980s and early 1990s.

However, also like many performers who survived their crazy heydays and entered more “normal” life, Hammer has had an eventful journey since those days of MTV superstardom. Hammer is a singer and dancer, but also a manager, producer, entrepreneur, TV personality and even a preacher. Listen in as *Mobile Beat* Publisher Ryan Burger talks to Hammer, in the latest in our series of MB Top 200 artist interviews.

Ryan Burger: I’m here with the musical legend, the entrepreneur, the man: MC Hammer, better known as just straight “Hammer.” Hammer, tell us a little bit about how you got into this whole business. Give us the five-minute version of your life story.

Hammer: Well, to condense it down to five minutes would be quite a task, after 25 years of just in the music business alone.

But I got into it out of just having a love for the art of dance and performance, of poetry, of rhyme, and then ultimately, of hip-hop. I grew up on bands from the Motown era, James Brown, and the funk bands, then Kool and the Gang and Parliament/Funkadelic and Bootsy Coolins and all those groups who laid the foundation on the funk side; obviously many of them coming out of the Godfather of Soul, James Brown’s band.

So coming from that era, from the Motown era, into the disco music of the ‘70s—all of it played an integral part in the fabric of who I am as an artist. And then of course, on into the ‘80s and the sensibilities of ‘80s music. And all that led to the launching of the career of MC Hammer.

R B: Obviously you’re known for your music and your dance skills. Did it all come naturally to you or what?

H: Well, all of those things I just talked about, the people and the periods of time, are all relative to my dance style as well. There was a certain way the dance was interpreted and executed in the ‘60s...And then you had a young kid by the name of Michael Jackson leading the Jackson Five in the late ‘60s as well. And so both of those styles, beginning first with the Godfather of Soul, James Brown’s style that I had already been watching for years as a little kid; going into what Michael Jackson and the Jackson Five brought to the table, the choreography, the movement, which was an offshoot also of what we were doing here in the Bay Area, very similar in style. And so all of those things laid the foundation of my dance style.

The Bay Area dancers had a unique way of executing all those movements and creating a lot of bugaloo/robot in, again, the late ‘60s, early ‘70s. So that foundation, and then that all going from there into the movements that you saw a lot on *Soul Train* in the early ‘70s; those styles combined with the disco styles of the mid- and late ‘70s and all played a part in my dance foundation.

R B: Got you. Did you ever get to meet some of those legends that you looked up to after you made your own impact on the industry?

H: After my first album, *Let’s Get It Started*, I met Michael Jackson and interacted him. He was at an awards show—the Soul Train awards—and he said he was very, very impressed with the live stage performance...From there we formed a relationship that spanned all the way until the time we lost him.

I also met James Brown after the first album, and then later incorporated him into several of my videos. We performed together, not just on the same bill, but we actually collaborated and did shows together over the years. So yeah, I got to meet everybody who inspired me.

R B: I asked some disc jockeys earlier today to give me questions for you, so these are coming from mobile DJs who are still playing your music all the time. What kind of music do you personally listen to? Do you still listen to a lot of the old soul and things like that that you said influenced you? I guess the question is, what’s on your iPod?

H: Well, the great thing about an iPod is that you’ve got thousands of songs. And so I’m one of the guys who carries literally thousands of songs with me everywhere I go, and they span the genres.

Everything from the music I heard at the Oakland A’s ballgames in the ‘70s, which would have been a combination of things like Creedence Clearwater and Elton John and the Rolling Stones, all the way over to Kool and the Gang, the staples of James Brown and a lot of Santana’s original music. And locally, we had a lot of great bands here, like Sly and the Family Stone.

So all of that is on my iPod; many genres. I could name 500 artists easy that are all on my iPod.

R B: What do you feel is your most underappreciated song—a song that you were proud of but that never really hit as big as you expected or hoped? (Another mobile DJ question for you.) I know you’re a big baseball fan, so here’s bit of a curveball...

H: Yeah. No, that’s no problem at all. I mean, there are always a few songs from every project that you think will resonate more than others. And actually they do end up resonating, but more in the live shows, because it’s not about the marketing campaign behind the song as a single. So to that extent, there’s been a lot of them, because I’ve got a lot of songs under my belt. So not one in particular, but a lot of songs.

R B: Here’s kind of an odd question I asked of one of the Village People when I interviewed them a couple of months

ago. Have you ever been at an event where they don't know Hammer is in the house, as a guest, and they put one of your songs on, just out of the blue?

H: Normally it doesn't matter where I am, people know if I'm there. But there may have been a sporting event or two over the years in a stadium situation where some of my music is playing and they didn't know I was there. That's happened a few times. I may have come in the second quarter or something or come after halftime or something to an event, and the music was already playing.

R B: Does it feel good to hear the music playing? Or is it kind of like, oh, I've heard that so many times?

H: Well, fortunately, in my situation my music never stopped being played. I didn't, like, go away for a few years and then the music came back. All the way up until the advent of digital media and video games, to platforms like Guitar Hero and the PS3 and the Xbox—all of those platforms have always had my music on them...For 10 years straight, the Disney Channel utilized "U Can't Touch This" on a daily basis, introducing it to new generations, and "Too Legit To Quit." That's why "Pray" crossed over many formats and not only continues to be played on pop stations and R&B stations but on gospel stations as well.

So it's a nice spread of music played on multiple platforms for 20-something years. So I'm always humbled by hearing the music. And again, they've created a whole format around stations that play music from the '80s and the '90s, and those stations exist in every city, and so they also play the music.

R B: I see you've been keeping yourself busy. In addition to a heavy performance schedule, you've got yourself involved in management; you've got yourself involved in the Dance Jam site; I see you tweet a lot. What else keeps you busy?

H: Well, all of the above; heavy into technology and social media, both as an investor and as an advocate and evangelizing the marriage of the platform; lecturing at Harvard and Stanford and Oxford in England and the Wharton School of Business and Technology; doing a ton of speaking for different corporations within the ecosystem around social media, including places like Twitter and YouTube and working with them and their staff on optimization of their platforms.

And then on the whole other side, I have Alchemist Mixed Martial Arts Management, where I have about 22 fighters. Got a couple guys fighting in Atlantic City this month on the UFC card...But staying tremendously busy with that. It's a global sport and I have fights all around the world, so staying busy with that.

And then also, touring all around the world throughout the year, each and every year. So my plate remains extremely full.

R B: They probably know you pretty well at the airport...

H: No doubt.

R B: I actually met you about 10 years ago at the Mobile Beat disc jockey conference. You came in and spoke for the Crossmix association of Christian DJs...You stressed at the time that you're a man of Christ...if I'm digging too far, please tell me.

H: Oh, no problem at all. You're not digging too far at all. The foundation of who I am has always been my faith. I've been an out-front, outspoken Christian since the inception of "MC Hammer as an artist." My first album I had, before there was a such thing as gospel rap, a song called "Son of the King" that came from a project back in 1985. The name of my original rap group was called The Holy Ghost Boys.

So going through that and going into the second album, which would have been *Please Hammer, Don't Hurt 'Em*, and having a song like "Pray" be a global record and a global smash hit, again, speaking of my faith. So it's never been any secret.

And on the *Too Legit To Quit* project, "Do Not Pass Me By," which I opened up the American Music Awards performing that song, insisting that I be able to perform it on the show, and so forth and so on.

...Both in community commitment, evangelizing, ministering, and being a good citizen of faith is the way I live my life.

R B: Is there anything else that you want to express to the mobile DJs reading this?

H: Just continue to play music in general. Melody triggers memories. Memories are the most valued aspect of life. Without memories, life is an empty shell. So melody and music that triggers memories go hand in hand. So we appreciate all the DJs out there keeping memories alive. **MB**



The Fine Art of Artist Promotion

MAYHEM IN THE MIDWEST: MBLV STARS HIT DES MOINES

BY RYAN BURGER AND JAKE FELDMAN •

After talking with the owners of a local drinking establishment where we are well connected (doing DJ Trivia there several times a week) about the cool artists that we bring out to the Mobile Beat Las Vegas conferences, they asked us what would be involved in bringing them out to Des Moines for a kickoff of summer event. The idea took us by surprise, but we were excited at the prospect, and decide to try and make it happen.

Having the connections already set up or one step away, we put together a full quote for producing the event, which became known as the "Kick Off of Summer at the Keg Stand." This article will chronicle everything we did to prep for the event, assist in marketing it, and provide production on the day of the event. We share it with you to show how you might do something similar in your own area.

GETTING THE ARTISTS

Yes, on this we are more connected than the average DJ service, but hooking up with retro artists (which is what most bars can afford to bring in anyway), isn't that hard really. When we first pursued Cupid, Thrill Da Playa (of 69 Boyz), and others, we just started looking around online looking at Facebook, searching on Google to find their own sites and more info. Most of these artists who haven't had a big hit recently are still living off of their handful of popular tracks, and are doing college gigs, summer festivals and other gigs every week or two to keep their name alive and pay the bills.

You will generally work with them directly or through a friend of theirs who serves as their manager. For some artists you will need to go through an agent. In the past we have worked through agents such as Chris Biller of CB Productions

(a.k.a. DJ Sparky B, known for his work with American DJ) who you can find online at CBRocks.Com or Entertainment Artists Nashville (EntertainmentArtistsAgency.com). These companies have worked with us on bringing in C&C Music Factory, Tone Loc, Vanilla Ice, DJ Kool, The Sugar Hill Gang and Coolio in previous years, and Cupid and Naughty By Nature for our most recent Vegas conference. After getting riders and base costs from the acts, we then felt we could make a full proposal to the local bar that had already expressed interest.

PROPOSAL AND ACCEPTANCE

The costs of producing this event on our end:

Securing the Artists: The artists usually ask for 50% upon contracting the event, and the remainder is due in cash that day. They also need hotel accommodations for a night or two, along with airfare from where they are based, plus meals. This is usually detailed on their rider. In this case, the artists cost us around \$3,500, plus airfare and hotel, ending up around \$4,500.

Audio and Lighting: We put up our standard concert system for a performance of \$2,000. That's with us providing sound, lighting and other assistance that day.

The bar needed to do the following in addition to serving the guests that day: Get the sound permit (with our help); advertise and promote; get a tent for the outdoor portion of the day; arrange security and a generator for that day (you don't want to plan on using their normal power for a concert like this); and pay the bill that we sent them.

After talking this out with the client and coming to an agreement, we used our standard client contract with some modifications to suit the type of event we were now producing (Email jfeldman@mobilebeat.com if you would like to see a copy of the eWebmin contract we used for this.)

PREPPING BEFORE THE EVENT, AND OTHER IDEAS

A lot of what happens next depends on how far the client wants to go with the event. If they simply want to have it in their bar with their own house sound system, you have to work with that. But most facilities don't have the sound and lighting required for such an event. If you are working with track artists (as most of ours have been), you are basically in need of a large school event-sized homecoming/prom-type sound and lighting system, with extra microphones and more stage space. We won't go into a ton of detail here, but just remember to always have backup for everything on-site, and have a rain location planned if your event is due to be an outdoor event.

Because chances are you have a lot more wrapped up into it laborwise than the average school dance, make sure to work with the sponsor/bar on promoting the event and making a big push on it. You should have three or four meetings, minimally, with the client and begin planning this event at least two or three months before the big day.

Thrill Da Playa of 69 Boyz gets their hands in the air.



Marketing Ideas:

- Tie-in with the local radio station that would be playing the artist's music, most generally a Top 40 dance or pop station. Request interviews on the air in advance, and have the artist record a bit for use in the commercial and more.
- Get in the local entertainment rags, supply plenty of pictures.
- Spread it all over Facebook wherever you can, especially if the bar has a strong presence.
- Promote heavily the host bar and any other bars under the same ownership. If you are the DJ at the bar, make sure on every shift you are playing some of the artist's music and plugging the event.

Our event, which was planned for Memorial Day 2011, went well, but did not have the attendance level we were all hoping for. But it did show the bar owners the possibilities clearly enough for them to talk about a summer wrap-up event for the Labor Day. We'll write a follow-up article (maybe just an online post at MobileBeat.Com) if we end up doing this event to bookend the summer.

THE BIG DAY

The day of the event is crazy. First of all, you need your crew setting up the rig that has been planned out in advance and you need to be dealing with the artist. Many of these artists still have demanding egos, and all still deserve your respect and personal attention. Make sure to check in with them earlier in the week and then again an hour or two before they are due to get on their plane to travel to your town. Ask them to text you when they land; pick them up personally and take them to either the sound check or the hotel depending on your plan.

After the sound check, they will want some more chill time. But approximately two hours before the performance take them back to the facility for a meet and greet with special guests such as the sponsors of the event, radio personalities possibly doing a remote broadcast, and more. Then you need to get them to a "green room" near the stage, where they can relax. Feed them and bring them a couple drinks or whatever their rider prescribes and go back to getting ready for the party. What we did at this event was have our DJs warm things up with music from the genre that the artist would be performing, and making sure to plug the event coming up. Then comes showtime, and the day rolls on from there.

RECAP AND OTHER THOUGHTS

The only issue we ran into that caused us any headache was with the opening act for the performance not making his flight. Because we had scheduled him to come in a day early we were able to get a replacement opening act from the same management (CB Productions, in this case). The important thing for dealing with problem situations like this is keeping communication solid between you and the artist and their management. Jake produced a fantastic event and I'm very proud of the level of production that he does. If you want to personally see some of his high-level work, make sure to get to Mobile Beat Vegas 2012 as he produces all the nighttime parties!

If you have any questions about this kind of production, feel free to contact either Ryan Burger at rb@mobilebeat.com or Jake Feldman at jfeldman@mobilebeat.com. **MB**



A shot of the overall setup, with DJ Kool jamming at center.

Making Connections

A brief conversation on bringing in outside artists with artist rep, DJ and all-around nice guy, Chris Biller...

Ryan Burger: I'm here with a friend of mine, Chris Biller, known as DJ Sparky B to a lot of you out there. He runs a company called CB Productions out of Ohio. Tell us a little bit about yourself, something maybe we don't know about you, Chris.

Chris Biller: Well, first of all, my name's Chris. Most people probably didn't know that. I've been Sparky B for a long time. I got into representing artists by actually touring with quite a few of them. I was out on the road for a while doing shows with Vanilla Ice and Tone-Loc and C&C Music Factory, a lot of the old school '80s and '90s acts. And became friends with them and just accumulated a lot of cell phone numbers over the years.

Over the last 10 years or so, people have come to me asking if I was able to get any of the acts that I had performed with. So I said, let me look into it. And I just called Vanilla Ice or Tone-Loc or any of these guys and brought them in that way. And one show led to two shows, led to four shows, led to 10 shows, and it just kind of went from there.

And I started CB Productions more as an agency just to book myself, because I was trying to sell myself years ago to the agencies and no one would really put me on their roster. So I started my own company and put myself on my own roster. And since then, obviously, other agencies have added me to theirs, but I made a nice little niche for myself bringing these groups in a lot of times on my shows.

I'll offer a four-hour video dance party featuring Vanilla Ice; or four-hour video dance party with lasers and confetti and such, featuring Tone-Loc.

Or recently, I've started working with a lot of newer acts, such as Cupid, who we're all familiar with. Super nice guy. So in working with some of the newer artists I'm able to keep in with the younger teen shows and such.

R B: Why would DJs want to bring one of these artists?

Explain what you did and why other DJs might want to emulate your approach.

C B: Well, I mean, a lot of people book Sparky B to book Sparky B. But I'm hardest on myself and I'm always worried that the show's going to get dry and stale and old. And I'm always looking for ways to spruce up the show a bit, and that's why I started incorporating some of these celebrities in my events, because it gave people something else to look forward besides getting sprayed down with confetti and silly string and stuff.

Why would a DJ want to bring in an artist? It's probably for the same reason that I use it: maybe just to set them above the rest of the guys in the territory, offering something that

Partners in crime: Vanilla Ice, left, and Chris Biller



no one else is offering. Everyone offers LED lights. Everyone offers the fog machines. And you can always rent CO₂ jets and whatever you want...but not everyone can get their hands on a celebrity. (Unless, of course, they go to www.cbcracks.com.)

R B: What should DJs be thinking about when they're doing that type of event for one of their clients, for instance, a local bar?

C B: I guess the most important thing is just making sure that the liability end of things is covered. A lot of times with my contract, I put that responsibility on the club owner. They sign off on the fact that they're going to provide event insurance for that particular show.

If for some reason they absolutely cannot do that, I can contact one of the insurance companies that I've worked with in the past and for a fee I can get a rider for that one-

Making Connections

day event for myself and just offer it myself.

R B: How about if they want to work with you, go through you to connect up with some of these different artists? What kind of information should they have so that you can actually make a quote and check on availability of some of these guys?

C B: If you're going to contact me for a show—or if you're going to contact any agency or management company, for that matter—you definitely want to come to them with a specific date in mind, a venue address, the time of show, if it's going to be indoor or outdoor, what all's involved, what budget

you're looking at. If you didn't have one in mind, have some sort of a budget set up for talent. And remember, you always have to take care of hotel rooms, airfares, ground transportation and some basic rider and production requirements as well...

...Your average track act is going to be, for the old school guys it'll be between \$3,500 and \$7,500 usually, on average. But then, depending upon who you get, it could go as low as 2 grand, could go as high as—well, it depends on who you want, how new do you want as well.

R B: Any other advice you want to pass on to DJs looking at these kinds of events?

C B: Again, look at what the other guys in the territory are offering to their clients and prospective clients, and offer something that they're not. You know, national acts. I don't know how many DJs are trying to sell a Ke\$ha to their high schools that they deal with on a regular basis.

[When] you go in and you set a meeting with the student council and the advisors, you'd be surprised how quickly

they start coming up with much larger budgets when you start talking about some of the people the kids hear on the radio and see on TV.

So the kids are the ones that usually do the okaying. The teachers listen to what the kids say because it's the kids' money, usually, anyways. But the teachers try to keep a leash on them. But for the most part, everyone wants to hang out with celebrities.

R B: How can people contact you if they want to work with you directly or get some more of your wonderful advice?

C B: They can either go to SparkyB.com or, for more information on the artists that I tend to deal with, go to www.cbcracks.com and just click on "roster." If there's someone not on my personal roster, I can always get a hold of anyone, for the most part. I have a lot of friends in the business. **MB**

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Blow Up Your Setup

YOU NEED A BIGGER RIG FOR AN EXPLOSIVE SCHOOL SHOW

BY ARNOLDO OFFERMAN •

In the last article I discussed what you should have, generally speaking, in order to begin a school dance business. This time, I want to focus on equipment only. You could be the world's greatest DJ, but if someone slightly less talented than you comes in with a portable nightclub then you may have just lost a client.

That being said, there's good news and bad news. The bad news: Unlike weddings, you will have to spend quite a bit on equipment. But you will also use a much bolder, completely different sales approach. It takes a while to get used to, but you will get used to it.

The good news: You get to buy new toys. As our company's school division grew, our wedding division grew as well. Many

trussing, STOP. Nothing less than 12" square Global Trussing should be used. It LOOKS bigger, is safer, and hosts more possibilities for setup and wire management. Thanks to crank systems, such as the ST-132, you can get a large span of trussing up high without spending thousands of dollars. These crank stands make it a lot easier to hang the lighting as well.

Sound is important, no doubt. As a school specialist, you'll want to find a combination of power, volume, sound quality, and efficiency in a cabinet that's affordable, since you may go through a few in your new venture. For me, so far, the Yorkville Elité series wins this HANDS DOWN. I have utilized two Ef500s and 2 Ls800p subs (coupled against a back wall) to successfully handle 700+ students. Impossible, you say? Ask any Yorkville user, these things get loud and have a great coverage area. Yorkville also offers the best guarantee I've personally seen.

For two tops to handle that many students, you're going to need to get them up high. Flying is an option that's best left to those more experienced with speaker rigging. The easiest way for mobiles to raise speakers above the crowd is by using Frankenstands. If you're not familiar with this revolutionary product, these stands have a hydraulic lift to make raising and lowering the speaker a breeze. An 82-lb. EF500 sits 6' high (measured



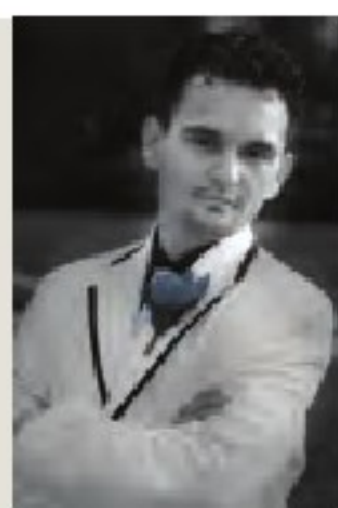
options that we bought for schools wound up being used for weddings. White trussing, game show systems, spotlights, special effects lighting, even black lights are now being sold for weddings. Sweet!

I love DJ gear. It is one of the many reasons why I love the school market. To market yourself appropriately, you gotta have some sort of big rig; thus I will share some of what I use to make us look big and bad to our clientele.

THE BIG SETUP

Every rig needs a support system. If you're using standard I-beam

Arnoldo Offerman specializes in youth events, and is the driving force behind 4 Schools Only, a new division of A Premier Entertainment, in Central Florida (Tampa, Orlando). In the last year, the company has more than doubled its number of clients and their average fee. Find out more at www.4schoolsonly.com, www.apremierentertainment.com and www.arnoldooffermand.com.



from the bottom of the speaker) on a Frankenstand F2 and there isn't so much as a wobble. This product has definitely saved our backs.

THE MOBILE DISCO LIVES

I'm going to skip video for now and discuss lighting. You're going to need four types of lighting: Floods, centerpiece, complementary, and special effects.

Floods are KEY to your new selling technique. We stayed simple and used generic LED PAR 64s, and I highly recommend this approach. Personally, I find panels and strips limiting. PARs allow more options when it comes to aiming lights, not to mention if one out of 12 PARs go down, it won't be as bad as 1 out of 4 strips going down.

Centerpiece lights are self-explanatory: They are the "wow" in your show.

These are the lights that are used to fill everyone with wonder. You can use more

than one kind, but never create your show out of nothing but centerpieces. My personal favorite is the American DJ AccuUFO coupled with the Spherion TRI LED. You can also check out the Martin EFX500 for another hot flavor.

Complementaries (a name I made up for them) are the lights that go around the centerpiece lights: moving heads, scanners, neat effects such as the ADJ's TriPhase or Nucleus Pro. These lights will always be seen in pairs of two or more.

Special effects are lights that are like an upgrade within themselves. Good luck convincing a school to pay more to upgrade from a halogen scanner to an LED (they just don't care about anything but the final effect; more on this in a future article). But you can show them a backlight package and sell that solo. You CAN upgrade them from a normal laser to a high-end, variance-required laser show. You can easily sell GOBOS. (Get a Rosco Source 4 for extra options and special effects.) These lights have a very large visual presence (such as the Bliss-50) and thus can be sold as individual add-ons to any package. Just think about the possibilities here that can also tie to your wedding

The bad news: You will have to spend quite a bit on equipment...The good news: You get to buy new toys.

market: uplights, spotlights, pinspots, and under-table lighting.

The most important thing when it comes to lighting is designing

around haze. You need to work on using haze at your venues.

Notice I say haze and not fog. Fog, to put it nicely, is for amateurs. Haze has a lot more benefits than fog. I use the LeMaitre Radiance. Using it at a light output fills a 1,200-person hall in 10 minutes; after 35 events, I just passed the half gallon mark. Try to do THAT with fog. Keep in mind that haze can still set off particle-based alarms. Anyone who says otherwise has just been lucky so far. Without haze, your show changes dramatically: You'll lose a lot of your aerial effects and have to focus more on floods and large sweeps (i.e., more scanners or moving heads).

Remember to buy gradually, or you will go very broke very quick. Start with a good foundation of sound, truss and lights. Remember that technology puts a lifespan on lights, so only buy what you'll use right away. Luckily, truss never expires; this will be the longest-running investment you'll make. There's a lot more equipment-wise that I didn't cover, such as video, but all in due time. Have a question? Email me at Arnoldo@ArnoldoOffermann.com and I'll be happy to help. Until next time.. **MB**



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The Marketing Magic of Pictures

THE VALUE OF DIGITAL PHOTOS: PICTURING A WIDER RANGE A POSSIBILITIES

BY RIC HANSEN •

When you think about it, it's all about the visual. Even as you talk or write, the listener's ear or reader's mind is turning your words into pictures, making text come to life visually in his or her mind. How that visual ends up looking to listeners is subject to your verbal description, and also their perceptions based on their own life experiences.



Of course if YOU provide the visual, it leaves less room for listener/reader interpretation--and makes the communication all the more clear. It also requires less verbiage or text, because a picture really can be worth a thousand words, as the old phrase goes. So, for the sake of clarity and brevity, your marketing should be loaded with visuals.

AMASSING IMAGES

Gathering images should be an ongoing project. Technology has made the process simple and economical; digital photography is a marketing guy's best friend. Taking a massive number of pictures costs you nothing--no film, no processing. The old-school mentality dictated that you searched for the perfect photo-op before you clicked the shutter and used one more picture on your limited roll of film. Now, it's snap, snap snap. The only cost to you is the time it takes to edit your photos to find the jewels. If you take a hundred pictures in a night, chances are good you will get 10 or 12 absolute winners. I suggest you discard anything marginal and keep only those that are great and usable. Loading your computer up with marginal shots is guaranteed to clutter and confuse. Tag your photos with date, event, and image content, so that you can find them again when it is time to use them.

I recommend you make picture taking a company priority. The camera should be as important as your speakers to take along to the gig. If you have multiple DJs make sure that your

pictures of yourself in action, your gear, and lights by turning the camera over to a friend, parent or faculty member.

PUT YOUR PICTURES TO WORK

Now that you have a ton of pictures, what next? Use them everywhere. Keep updated shots on your website, your blog, your e-mail marketing and on your direct mail pieces. Put them up on your Flickr account, post the great ones on your Facebook page, tweet them. Pictures are your best way to get noticed by search engines, and are always a welcome treat for your friends and followers online. Even if someone is too busy to read a post, they may take a moment to check out a picture.

And now here is my favorite use of pictures: producing them in a fast paced slide show set to music. It can be done in a variety of ways using readily available tools both on Mac's and PCs. But wait...there is a quicker and better way. There is an amazing online tool called Animoto (www.animoto.com). If you have not discovered this yet, you are in for a treat. It allows you to load your best pictures, add text between the shots, and select music that they provide (royalty free) or use your own audio track. You can highlight certain pictures, select the show speed (fast, medium or slow) and then click a button. Within 5 or 10 minutes you will be notified that your slide show is ready. Animoto has magically created a fast paced, slickly produced video, ready to be shared, embedded on your web site or published on YouTube. Amazing.

Gathering images should be an ongoing project. Technology has made the process simple and economical

company policy includes taking pictures. Provide a bonus for the best picture of the month. Make it clear what you are looking for: pictures of crowd participation and happy party guests. Have a roadie or student helper take pictures of the DJ in action. As company owner, I make it a priority to drop by and observe company events, and use it as an opportunity to get pictures of our guys in action.

Words of caution. When taking pictures, especially of minors, it is sometimes a sensitive issue. At youth events, sometimes administrators, faculty or parents are overly concerned about pictures being taken of their students and posted on the Internet without their permission. To help pave the way, I suggest putting a line in your dance contract that says, unless otherwise requested, pictures may be taken at their event for the purpose of marketing. It is also wise to make a disclaimer at the event that pictures taken during the event are for the sole purpose of on-going marketing. Don't make a huge deal out of it to avoid causing concern where there is none and raising red flags unnecessarily. If there are objections or specific school policies in place restricting pictures, by all means honor them. It's a shame, but in this day of privacy and pervers, picture taking can be an issue. If pictures of the crowd are restricted, at least take the opportunity to get

If you didn't like that particular edit of your pictures, click again, and they return it to you with a whole new edit job. You can check it out and do as many 30 second videos as you'd like at no charge. You'll likely find that 30 seconds isn't long enough to tell the story but if you buy the full length version of the program it is only \$30 per year (with Animoto branding) or the Pro version without Animoto Branding is \$249 per year.

Just think of the applications. You can create mini promos for your company's various services. Create a promo video for weddings, another one for school dances, another for sweet sixteens. Then post them on YouTube, feature them on a landing page or website or send the link to prospective clients. You can also use these amazing little videos as a follow up or thank you to clients. Instead of a thank you note, send them a video of their wedding set to their first dance song. Or after the prom send a recap video to the class president. I guarantee it will go viral at that school. On top of all that, video posts on YouTube and elsewhere are search engine magnets. **ME**

Ric Hansen is the publisher of The School Dance Network (SchoolDanceNetwork.com), a valuable online resource for DJs who work youth events. Ric also markets mobile DJ services nationwide and is available as a coach, consultant or DJ agent/manager. Contact him at 800-954-DJ or Ric@RadioParties.com. Subscribe free to Ric's newsletter at DJHotTalk.com.

Driving a New Traktor

TRAKTOR 2.0 PULLS ITS WEIGHT AS THE LATEST UPGRADE

BY JIM WEISZ •

There are few tools more important to a digital DJ than his software and computer. For wedding jocks, you're playing music on the most important day for the bride and groom. So, you want to be 100% there won't be any hiccups or issues that will affect the music playback.

I started DJing 11 years ago on a dual CD deck. I still remember my first deck didn't have shock protection, which blew me away at the time considering personal consumer CD players had that feature. A few years later, I started dabbling in DJing from my computer. Then, for about three or four years, I was what I called a hybrid DJ, switching back and forth between CD and computer. I would usually use the computer for cocktail and dinner hour, after which I would use CDs. Finally, for the

last few years, I've been 99% digital. (The other 1% is because I still play the special dances from CD.)

DJing from computer is pretty amazing if you think about it. I was fortunate to skip the days of lugging around vinyl. Possibly even more fortunately, I also skipped cassettes and mini-disc, both of which I'm sure were huge hassles.

So here we are today, being able to walk into a wedding with thousands of songs on a computer weighing just a few pounds. While the concept is great, it takes a good system and reliable, comfortable software to execute computer DJing properly. So, I decided to take the latest release from Native Instruments, Traktor 2.0, out for a spin.

INTRO

The installation of Traktor 2.0 on my MacBook Pro was almost completely painless. Once I got it installed, I had to point the software to my music folders. To do that, I went to the settings menu and

went to "file management." From there, I chose my music folders and waited for them to import. However, there was still another step that needed to be done. I had to go right click on the main screen and select "import music folders." I'm not sure of the purpose behind making it a two step process—I think it would be easier if adding a folder under file management would take care of it.

The music loaded fast—very fast. After the music loaded, I noticed down in the bottom right hand corner of my screen that it showed the total number of songs, as well as the total amount of hard drive space being used by the songs. Not necessary information for me, but I liked it nonetheless.

Overall the interface is clean and very slick. It's pretty intuitive, since like most digital DJ software, it is set up with the dual playback decks and controls that just about all DJs are familiar with.

Below the decks are 10 shortcuts to playlists. These are very nice if you want

to make playlists for certain genres or themes (e.g. dinner music), or if you want to create a playlist for a particular event. That way, you can just click on that shortcut to bring up all the music in that playlist.

While the playlist feature is very nice, it didn't seem like I could drag and drop the playlists to rearrange them. So, that was a bit of a hassle when I tried to get them in the order I wanted.

As far as all the other settings in the settings menu, I didn't have to adjust any of them, other than my routing settings



for my controller. So, bottom line, the software was pretty plug and play, right out of the box.

IN THE FIELD

I spent a few hours playing around with Traktor 2.0 to get used to the feel and interface of the software. I also let it run on "cruise" for a few hours just to make sure there weren't any hiccups. While testing, I did some multi-tasking to see how it handled that. I was able to open several browser windows, as well as quite a few programs, with no issues at all. I didn't notice any locking up or hesitation at all.

Using "cruise" for the first time was a bit confusing. Cruise is Traktor's way of automating the playback of music. It's a nice feature to have, and pretty much a must-have for any mobile DJ. Basically, I had to create a playlist and add a bunch of songs to it and then the system would automate that. That works just fine, but it would be nice if I could skip the step of creating a playlist. I'd like to be able to right click and just create a cruise list for that event date. There might be a way to do that, but not one that I could figure out.

Once cruise is set up, it runs very smoothly. I appreciated the setting to adjust the fade in and out time when in cruise mode. I did make a slight adjustment to that setting to improve the transitions.

After spending quite a bit of time getting to know Traktor 2.0, I was ready to use it at a wedding with my Pioneer MEP-7000. The MEP acts as a controller and sound card, and interfaces very nicely with Traktor. The initial set-up required a bit of troubleshooting, since all the settings didn't quite make sense to me, but I finally got it up and running.

Throughout the night of the wedding, everything went great. I didn't have any issues with the software and it met just about all of my needs. One feature I really missed having is essentially a mix now button. I've used other software in the past that would allow me to hit a button like that and it would fade down one deck and fade up the other one. I don't

use it very often, but I do find it comes in handy if I want to switch songs while making an announcement. It's also nice for doing intros to switch back and forth between decks.

IN SEARCH OF...

One feature I really liked was Traktor 2.0's search capability. As you type, it starts to show results immediately. It did help me find songs a hair faster than traditional search methods. While it wasn't necessary, it is a nice additional feature.

While the search function works great overall, I don't like how the search is left in the search box. For example, I could search for "Pitbull" and cue up the song I wanted. Then, I could browse to a different folder or playlist to look for a song. When I go back to my main track collection, "Pitbull" is still in my search box. So, I have to hit the X button to clear that out. It really became a hassle the more I used the software.

Another issue I had with the search function is the lack of ability to search by year. While the year does show up in the screen, you can't search by that field. I like to search by year quite a bit, so that was disappointing. Also, it didn't seem like you could search with an asterisk. Since it pulls up the results as you search, it may not be needed, but it would be a nice feature.

WRAP UP

I've been using Traktor 2.0 as my primary DJ software for a few months now, and overall I really like it. As far as reliability, I have no hesitation using Traktor 2.0 as my main DJ software. It seems to be very solid and runs smoothly.

I do feel like it is geared more towards club DJs, and perhaps that is why it's missing some of the features I'm looking for. If that is the case, it is still a great option for mobile DJs, and probably even better for club DJs. I think DJs who work in both club and mobile environments would probably really like Traktor 2.0. **MB**

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Tri It, You'll Light It

CHAUVET'S NEW SLIMPAR PRO SERIES UPS THE LED ANTE

BY JIM WEISZ •

On the heels of the success of the SlimPar line, Chauvet has released the new SlimPar Pro line of LED lighting. The lights, which debuted at the NAMM show this past January, are available in three different versions—RGBA, Tri and VW.

The VW is a variable white fixture which Chauvet says is good for matching color temperature of existing lighting and for video use. The RGBA features red, green, blue and amber LEDs. Finally, the Tri, which is what I demoed for this article, is based on technology which mixes the color before the lens. The purpose of mixing the color before the lens is to remove the shadows or halos typically seen at the base of the light when mixing colors with LED fixtures.

I was very excited to see what this light was capable of, given the very high lux rating of 9,600 at 1 meter. The SlimPar 64 has a lux rating of 3,640 at 1 meter. So, the SlimPar Pro Tri is approximately 2.5 times brighter than the SlimPar 64. Also, at the time of this writing, I couldn't find another portable LED light with a lux rating as high as the SlimPar Pro lights (the RGBA also sports an impressive lux rating of 10,000 at 1 meter).

It's very easy to get caught up in the ratings given to these lights by the manufacturers. However, something to keep in mind is 1 meter is approximately 3 feet. More than likely, if you are us-



ing these lights for uplighting, you are expecting the light to project further than 3 feet. But since 1 meter is an industry standard, it still gives you a good idea how they compare.

FIRST IMPRESSION

When removing them from the box, the first thing I noticed was how solid the Tri feels. I've owned a few different models of the original SlimPars. While they were durable and I didn't have any issues with them, these lights feel like they were built even better

than their predecessors.

For my lighting needs, minimal size and weight top my list of desired features. The Pro lights aren't as small or light as the original SlimPars, but they are very compact and not too heavy.



The SlimPar Pro Tri weighs in at 6.4 lbs. and measures 3.7" x 10.1" x 11.4". They aren't super compact, but they aren't big and bulky either.

On the back of the SlimPar Pro is a control panel much like the one found on other similar LED fixtures. The control panel allows you to mix a color right on the light, as well as use other features, such as strobe or pick a preset color like red or blue.

A feature I really like on the SlimPar Pro is the locking IEC power cable. While I've

never had anyone pull the power cord out from one of my lights, it is a nice added bit of security to have.

CHECKING THEM OUT

Of course the first thing I wanted to do was a side-by-side of a SlimPar 64 with a SlimPar Pro. The results were pretty amazing. As expected, the Pro was significantly brighter than the original SlimPar 64. I will say this though, even though the Pro was quite a bit brighter, the SlimPar still held its own and put out a good amount of light. However, it was easy to see which light was brighter. Also, the color on the Pro seemed more vivid and a bit truer than the original SlimPar.

After the side-by-side, I took some time to check out the menus on the SlimPar Pro. I really liked the buttons. They are big and easy to press. I found it very easy to navigate the menus and accomplish what I was trying to do.

Once I was done running through the features, I created a custom color and then unplugged the light. Later that night, I plugged it in and it immediately went to the color I had programmed. I expected that to happen, but just needed to make sure it would hold the last programmed color. I think that is a great feature to have in a light, so you can set them before you get to the venue.

PUT TO USE

Spoiler alert: I liked these lights so much, I ended up buying enough to replace my current lighting system. I needed to mention that now because it gave me the unique perspective of being able to take a whole system out and use it in place of my old lights. It's nice to demo one light to run through the features and compare to what you currently have, but it's really great to have an entire package of lights to be able to see how they look together. Fortunately, I received the new lights just in time for an uplighting rental I had coming up.

The lights were going to be used for a wedding reception with about 150 guests in an average-sized banquet hall. Normally, for a room this size, I would probably use about 20 lights. Given the output of these lights, I expected I'd be able to use about half as many lights as I would normally use.

I made a concerted effort to not pay attention to how many lights I was setting up and rather set-up as many needed to make the room look great. Fortunately, the room didn't have windows, so I was able to turn the house lights down and see the effect of the lights as I was setting them up. When I was finally done, I had set-up 14 lights. I might have been able to do 10-12, but the room had a few corners where I wanted to spread some light. Also, my goal wasn't to see how few lights I needed to use, but rather how many would it take to create the desired look.

Once all set-up, I was thoroughly impressed. Using just 14 lights, the room looked great. I thought it looked better than it would have if I had set-up 20 of my old lights.

WRAP-UP

Not a whole lot of surprise here—I got the demo light, loved it, bought 15 more, and have been running them ever since. We've



used them for several events and the lights have been great. My only real complaint is the length of the power cords, which are only about six feet long. 15' would be optimal, but I'd like to see them come with at least a 10' cord.

Other than that small gripe, I've been very happy with the Chauvet SlimPAR Pros. They put out bright, true colors and do a good job of color mixing. In the advertising, they say mixing the colors before the lens removes the shadow. I wouldn't 100% agree that it removes the shadow, as I did still see it with some

color combinations. However, I do think it is greatly reduced compared to other LED lights I have seen. It is definitely the least noticeable shadow I have seen, which is nice from an aesthetics standpoint.

These lights aren't cheap, but I think they are worth the investment. I prefer to buy equipment that I think will last for a long time. I expect to be using these lights for quite a while—at least for as long as uplighting is the hot trend with weddings! **ME**

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Get Irradiated, in a Good Way...



...WITH FRESH GEAR FROM A HOT COMPANY

BY SETH "DJ LEO" LEOPOLD •

Lighting can be a tricky subject to tackle amongst DJs. Which lights suit your style and needs? And how badly will they impact your bottom line?

If you are just jumping into the lighting arena, the new Home Party Series of intelligent lighting from Irradiant provide an excellent option. Each of these new LED lights adds a different effect to your dance floor, without damaging your bank account to much.

GOBO, MAN

Irradiant's LED Archispot 20 is their new LED gobo projector. This fixture was made for a shorter projection distance, about 10 to 25 feet from the surface that you are projecting onto. The Archispot 20 also allows a new level of usability by letting you make your



own custom gobos using just transparency paper! This greatly reduces your potential cost of operation by eliminating the absolute need for glass or metal gobos.

With its compact and lightweight design, and the 5-watt LED lights used to produce the light, the Archispot 20 also produces no real heat (allowing you to place it anywhere without being a fire or injury risk). Yet it

has an amazing output for an LED gobo projector, which kicks this model into the upper-echelon of gig-worthy gear. In fact, the true litmus test would be the ability to see the projection in a fully-lit room—in which case, this fixture passed.

OLD FOUR-EYES

My favorite piece from Irradiant's new series is the 4IZ. This light is a long sleek effect with four "eyes" that produce RGB colored moving dots, thus creating memorizing patterns on the dance floor.

Roadworthiness accounts for a lot in this business, and this light bank is a prime example of rugged design, housed in a lightweight steel frame and weighing only 18 pounds—a sturdy yet easily portable effect light. The 4IZ can operate as DMX master, slave or in sound active mode, which is the standard. The light only uses 30 watts of juice at most to operate, leaving you with



a lot of room on the circuit for your 30-year-old power hog of an amp. (Kidding, I hope).

The 4IZ is perfect for t-bar or truss mounting and would function well as a centerpiece light in any LED-based show. I also am a fan of cool case design, so the "linking-wheel" graphics on the front add some extra spice to my show during the early portions of the day and evening when the lights are on.

DISCO LIVES

Also in Irradiant's Home Party Series is their all-in-one setup called the Disco in a Box. (Pictured above and directly below.) This kit contains four LED microlights, a scanner, a strobe spot, a moonflower effect, and an RGB color wash. Designed to give a basic but full light show, all four lights are wireless DMX controllable, allowing the DJ to have full command over the lights without the clutter of DMX cords. They also have the ability to power link,



meaning all four lights can be link via power cords and powered using just one power source. Combined with the wireless DMX control, the system allows the DJ to only run a single cord to the lights and have total control over the light show.

The Micro Strobe Spot within the Disco in a Box set is a small and easy-to-use strobe light. It runs on a supplied 24v DC power supply, and measures only 7" x 4" x 6", making it very easily portable. Light is produced by one three-watt white LED.

Also included in the Disco in a Box is the Mini Moonflower. This light is also only 7" x 4" x 6" and weights just little over 1.5 pounds. It also runs of a supplied 24v DC power cord and is made up of 16 LEDs each of red, green and blue.

Next in the set is the Mini-Washer. It produces red, green or blue light to paint the whole dance floor, filling in the space that

the effect lights don't cover. It also utilizes 16 LEDs for each of the RGB colors. The Mini-Washer weighs less than 1.5 pounds and measures less than 5" x 4.5" x 6".

The final light in the box is the Micro-Light scanner. It is micro for a scanner, but it is the biggest light in box set, weighing in at a little under four pounds and measuring 13" x 4.5" x 5". It produces its effect light again using 16 pieces of each red, green, blue LEDs.

All together, the Disco in a Box units can truly create a party feel without busting the bank. And while these lights are all sold together in the Disco in a Box package, they are all available separately for replacement or to double up (triple up, etc...) on each type.

AFFORDABLE FUN

Irradiant's new lights are a great choice for any beginner DJ or anyone looking for a quick, easy, inexpensive way to add some excitement to their show. They give the operator an ease of use that usually costs a lot more, and they help one avoid a headache-inducing learning curve.

Quite possibly, the most important aspect of these lights is their affordability, given today's tough DJ business landscape. In theory and in practice, lights should be fun, easy, and reasonably priced. Irradiant has met and exceeded these criteria with some sleekly-styled effects that compliment each other nicely. Any DJ using them can create a light show worth partying to! **ME**

www.irradianthq.com

The Atmosphere Is Psychedelic!

Clubs, discos and parties will go psychedelic when DJs and entertainers unleash the new Atmospheric RG LED from American DJ. Mind-blowing as a trip back to the '60s, the unit is a unique DMX lighting fixture that combines a 30



mW green laser and an 80 mW red laser with a 3W blue LED wash to create a truly "hip"-notic, free-flowing effect: spacey, spidery web-like laser patterns, blue LED wash clouds across the back-

ground. With beam angles of 70° for the lasers and 66° for the LED, the Atmospheric RG LED can cover a lot of territory, washing an entire room or dance area in its dreamlike ambience. And since both of its lasers are FDA-approved (in the United States), this one-of-a-kind atmospheric effect can be used safely in any installation or application. For specs and video demos, go the ADJ website.

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Hitting the Road with DJ-Tech

THREE AFFORDABLE PRODUCTS WITH SURPRISING CAPABILITIES

BY J. RICHARD ROBERTS •

Sometimes workhorses in your rig don't have to be the most expensive or have the biggest name brand. Often a product will dutifully and thanklessly perform its job and keep you raking in the big bucks with only a small dent in your bottom line. I love reviewing those products.

Three new products in this vein from DJ-Tech have recently caught my eye: specifically the uSolo FX, the U2 Station MKII, and the DJM-303. The following are my experiences with these products:

USOLO FX : TURNTABLE-STYLE PLAYER/CONTROLLER

Unless you've been living in a cave in the desert for a while, then you know that computer-based controllers are what's hot in this industry at the moment. While other manufacturers have chosen to go the route of larger, club-sized turntable media-player controllers, DJ-Tech has thought about the mobiles with the release of the uSolo FX.

Pint-sized, but certainly not pint-powered, the uSolo FX combines the utility of CD turntables of years-gone-by with the new-school flexibility of MIDI mapping and software control. With the added bonus of being its own stand-alone media player.

The uSolo FX is capable of playing from SDHC cards, USB flash drives, and USB external drives (up to 250 GB) in both WAV and MP3 format, making this a formidable companion on your digital musical journey.



To help manage your files and make navigation easier, DJ-Tech has included DATABOX software, which works well with the unit's convenient jog wheels. TRACK SCAN also allows you to jump to eight different parts of the song, while the uSolo FX comes standard with three storeable (and saveable) cue points per song, for those of you who

like to play different parts of different songs all night.

Also included: brake/loop; effects (echo/flanger/filter); scratch mode; HD Sharing (for more than one unit); compatibility with Traktor LE and Deckadance LE.

U2 STATION MKII: THE DIGITAL DJ'S CONTROLLER

This unit looks, feels, and acts like a traditional mobile DJ controller should, with two players and one mixer built into an all-in-one solution. Simplicity is the name of the game with this piece (oh, there are plenty of features—more in a minute), and the whole unit exudes the plug-and-play attitude that people have come to expect from their technology.

The U2 Station MKII features two decks with three-band EQ



per channel, along with five selectable effects, BPM and pitch control, and DATABOX Software.

One feature especially worth noting is the set of realistic jog wheels, that compare with products costing a heck of a lot more than this controller. I found them to be very fluid and reliable in a show situation.

DJM-303: TYING YOUR SOUND TOGETHER WITH A RIBBON

And finally, DJ-Tech has a new battle-style mixer, known as the DJM-303, that can be used with vinyl, CDs, or digital turntable-style controllers to mix all of your sound together and send it out in one happy bundle to your amps, processors, or powered speakers.

The mixer itself is typical of battle-style units, being dual-channel with USB interface capabilities. All of the standards are here, like fader start functions, tri-band EQ, balanced USB outputs, and a very sturdy crossfader that will thrill true scratch jocks. A few new favorites, like the five-bank sampler, the onboard digital effects, and two built-in sound cards, also add cutting edge essence to the unit.



HITTING THE ROAD WITH DJ TECH

I had the opportunity to bring these three pieces to my DJ shows over the last month, and had performance experiences with each of them. In reverse order, I took out a pair of Technics 1200's with the DJ-Tech DJM-303 in the middle, controlling my sound. As I used the onboard sound cards, the mixer had no noticeable latency issues while interfacing with my software, and did the task remarkably well (putting me at ease and allowing me to play with

the effects and sampling that are onboard).

Next, I took out the U2 Station MKII to a middle school dance and used it as my primary player and mixer (with my laptop), and I must say the unit performed remarkably well. That's saying something, because I'm not incredibly good at setting up controllers; this one was actually pretty easy after I perused the manual.

Although I have an innate need to use pairs of everything, and I only had one U-Solo FX unit for review, I did end up using the controller for a ceremony-only event that I had to perform (outdoors in June—fun). In this albeit limited task, the U-Solo FX performed well (and there was some serious heat happening outdoors that day), but I can honestly say in a real-gig situation, because of my large hands, my preference would be for a larger controller. That being said, though, the easy transportability of two U-Solo FX controllers plus a battle mixer would be astounding and should be looked at if you like to tour light.

A FINAL THOUGHT

Having had no experiences with DJ-Tech in the past, and only reading about their products in various trade magazines, I didn't know what to expect. From what I know now, this company's products are economical and right up the alley for some bedroom DJs, some club DJs, and some mobile DJs. Give them a try and see what their line of products can do for you. **ME**

www.djtechpro.com

EYE CANDY

Blizzard Licenses Philips LED Tech

Blizzard Lighting, LLC has entered into an agreement with Philips Electronics to license Philips' full portfolio of patents and other intellectual property relating to LED-based lighting, as available through Philips LED Luminaire and Retrofit Bulb licensing program.

Through the program, Blizzard will have access to dozens of Philips' patents covering LED color changing and tunable-white luminaires, as well as Philips-patented technology for control and dimming of LEDs and other SSL's (solid state luminaires).

"We are very pleased to conclude this agreement with Philips, and look forward to a long and innovative partnership with their team...Like Philips, we are committed to constant innovation, so this agreement is a great fit on many levels," said Will Komassa, President of Blizzard Lighting.



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The Secret

HOW TO GET ALL THE REFERRALS YOU COULD EVER HOPE FOR

BY JEFFREY GITOMER •

Everyone in management will tell every salesperson to “ask for referrals” or “don’t forget to ask for referrals” or “as soon as you make the sale, ask for a referral.” These strategies are not only wrong, they also jeopardize the future of the relationship.

First of all, why are you “asking” (begging) for a referral?

Second of all, why are you asking when you haven’t earned anything?

REALITY: Asking for referrals makes EVERYONE feel awkward. And usually results in a turndown, or a delay. A delay that goes on for months.

A referral is the second strongest lead in sales. The first is an unsolicited one.

MAJOR CLUE: Referrals are not asked for—referrals are EARNED.

SCENARIO: You get a referral from a customer without asking for it. You make a sale. Your boss asks you, “How’d you get that referral?” And you respond, “I earned it.” Your boss will NOT know what to say next.

Give to get.

There are all kinds of names applied to the process of “giving” a referral to a customer. Pay it forward. Netweaving. BUT the salesperson will forever live in darkness if he or she expects something in return.

Which brings me to this PRIME example of what not to do. I got this email “request for an answer” today:

“Hey Jeff, I can’t seem to ever get any referrals! I go back to the customer after the

sale, I give them an appreciation gift and ask them for some people and they say they don’t know anybody or don’t think anybody else can afford it?! What to do?

The guy didn’t even sign the email. That’s a good start to not getting referrals.

This guy thinks by bringing candy that he deserves a referral. And his email proves my point. He will NEVER get referrals this way—AND NEITHER WILL YOU.

What is this guy’s business logic behind his actions? And what’s yours? Asking for referrals is not only a poor practice, it’s also rude and embarrassing.

NOTE WELL: There are those who claim expertise in the referral process that will differ in opinion. Take their advice and end up like the anonymous emailer above—empty.

I will admit my strategy is harder to perform. GOOD. That way the lazy salespeople will not be in competition. And you may actually get some referrals this way. Five referrals out of a hundred tries. BUT the other 95 people will avoid you forever. Not good.

Ask yourself:

- What have I earned so far?
- Have I done anything besides make a sale?
- On a scale of 1-10, how strong is this relationship?
- If I asked for a referral right now would it be or feel awkward?
- Why would this customer give me a referral? NOTE: If you can’t think of a reason, neither can your customer.

Then ask yourself:

- What can I do that will get me from where I am to where I want to be?
- Do I have a real referral game plan?
- What are the value actions I need to

be (consistently) taking to begin earning referrals?

The questions above are the ones that need to be asked BEFORE YOU TAKE ANY REFERRAL ACTIONS.

Here are the TOP 6.5 referral EARNING strategies:

1. Deliver memorable service. It’s simple. Be friendly and helpful, and give positive response.

2. Be available. Make it easy to do business with you and anyone else in your company 24/7/365.

3. Be a consistent value provider. Create an email magazine and blog with content that helps customers, and a business Facebook page where you post positive and helpful information and good news, and allow for customer interactions.

4. Give a referral to the customer. This requires work, but it’s a great way to prove your worth.

5. Get them one LinkedIn contact they can benefit from. See if any of your connections could be of value to your customers, and make connections.

6. Develop the relationship slowly over time. Create your long-term value plan, and execute it consistently. Always post a “thank you” for referred business.

6.5 DON’T ASK FOR A REFERRAL IF YOU HAVEN’T EARNED ONE.

There’s an underlying, powerful message in what I’m saying here. It’s about having a philosophy of giving, without the expectation of getting anything in return. This philosophy, if adopted, will give you a lifetime of fulfillment without an ounce of regret, remorse, or resentment.

Give to give. Don’t give to get. **MB**



Jeffrey Gitomer is the author of *The Little Red Book of Selling*. President of Charlotte-based Buy Gitomer, he gives seminars, runs annual sales meetings, and conducts Internet training programs on selling and customer service at www.gitomer.com. He can be reached at 704-333-1112 or e-mail to salesman@gitomer.com.

It's Hip to Be Square

A new credit card system allows you to take deposits and balances on the fly thru your cell phone. It's called Square.

While listening to one of my favorite podcasts on the TWIT network (twit.tv) I heard about the newest in credit card merchant account technologies, and the great thing is that it's exceedingly simple. Mobile Beat, ProDJ and its local DJ company, BC Productions, have been accepting credit cards for 15+ years, as it was a necessary part of our business working with DJs and companies around the world on their websites, advertisements and more. Plus, brides are increasingly using credit cards and debit cards for their weddings.

And over the last 15 years it has gotten less and less expensive to have a merchant account, to be able to accept such cards and payments. In the last couple of years it has basically been an expense of a few hundred dollars for a machine hooked to a telephone line, where you swipe the cards and print receipts.

But being as mobile as mobile DJs are, this often isn't the best situation. Most mobile DJ companies don't have offices like we do, and thus are often meeting with clients at their homes or some neutral location place like restaurant. Makes it hard to accept a credit card for the deposit when the client is ready to pay. And there was no way to accept payment for the balance at the end of an event.

The American Disc Jockey Association partnered with Intuit

and its GoPayment system last year to offer this kind of service, and until the last six months, there hasn't been a good competitive program to that system.

The Square system has no upfront costs (\$10 if you buy the swiper at the Apple store, which Square will pay you back, or get a free swiper through Squareup.com). You pay 2.75% of your transaction fee with no minimums, no extra fees, monthlies, etc. The application runs on the Android platform, as well as iOS devices (iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch). The unit plugs into the headphone port of your device and allows you to swipe easily through the port. You need to have a live internet connection (wi-fi or 3G) for it to work. Mobile Beat just finished using it on the Summer Tour and is planning on using it for the Las Vegas show to save on our operation costs onsite. ~ *Ryan Burger*



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Marketing Yourself

“KNOW THYSELF”—AND SEND THE RIGHT MESSAGES

BY JAY CONRAD LEVINSON •

Whether you know it or not you're marketing yourself every day.

And to lots of people! You're marketing yourself in a quest to make a sale, warm up a relationship, get a job, get connected, get something you deserve. You're always sending messages about yourself.

Guerrillas control the messages that they send. It's all about intention. Guerrillas live intentionally. Non-guerrillas send unintentional messages, even if those messages sabotage their overall goals in life. They want to close a sale for a consulting contract, but their inability to make eye contact or the mumbled message they leave on an answering machine turns off the prospect.

Guerrillas send no unintentional messages

Unintentional messages erect an insurmountable barrier. Your job: be sure there is no barrier. There are really two people within you—your accidental self and your intentional self. Most people are able to conduct about 95 percent of their lives by intent. But that's not enough.

It's the other 5 percent that can get you in trouble—or in clover. I'm not talking phoniness here. The idea is for you to be who you are and not who you aren't—to be aware of what you're doing, aware of whether or not your actions communicate ideas that will help you get what you deserve.

Who do you market to without even realizing it?

Employees. Customers. Prospects. Teachers. Parents. Children. Bosses. Prospective employers. Mates. Prospective mates. Friends. Sellers. Landlords. Neighbors. Professionals. Members of the community. The police. Service people. Family. Bankers. These people can help you or stop you from getting what you deserve. You can influence them with how you market yourself.

THREE BIG QUESTIONS

To market yourself properly, answer these three questions:

1. *Who are you now? If friends described you, what would they say? Be honest rather than complimentary.*
2. *What do you want out of life? Be specific.*
3. *How will you know when you've reached your goals?*

If you can't answer these questions, you're doomed to accidental marketing, spending your life reacting instead of responding, the odds against you reaching your goals.

Jay Conrad Levinson is the author of the modern business classic, **Guerrilla Marketing**, which has become a landmark book in 62 languages. Small and large businesses alike have applied the principles of *Guerrilla Marketing* because of their simplicity, common sense, and proven track record. 20 million copies of **Guerrilla Marketing** books have been sold worldwide, and the many universities now include the concept in their MBA programs.



How do you send messages and market yourself right now? With your appearance, to be sure. You also market with your eye contact and body language, your habits, your speech patterns. You market yourself in print with your letters, email, website, notes, faxes, brochures and other printed material. You also market yourself with your attitude—bigtime. You market yourself with your ethics.

HOW PEOPLE JUDGE YOU

Again, you may not be aware of it, but people are constantly judging and assessing you by noticing many things about you. You must be sure the messages of your marketing don't fight your dreams. What are people using to base their opinions, to make their decisions about you?

*Clothing • Hair • Weight • Height
Jewelry • Facial hair • Makeup • Business card
Laugh • Glasses • Title • Neatness
Smell • Teeth • Smile • What you carry
Eye contact • Gait • Posture • Tone of voice
Handwriting • Spelling • Hat • Thoughtfulness
Car • Office • Home • Nervous habits
Handshake • Stationery • Availability • Writing ability
Phone use • Enthusiasm • Energy level • Comfort online*

You're fully aware of your intentional marketing and possibly even invest time, energy and imagination into it, not to mention money.

But you may be undermining that investment if you're not paying attention to things that matter to others even more than what you say: keeping promises, punctuality, honesty, demeanor, respect, gratitude, sincerity, feedback, initiative, reliability. They also notice passion—or the absence of it. They notice how well you listen to them.

WHAT DO NOW

Now that you know these things, what should you do? Although Ben Franklin himself said that three of the hardest things in the world are diamonds, steel and knowing yourself, here's a three-step plan to get you started on the road to self-awareness and self-marketing acumen:

1. Write a positioning statement about yourself. Identify just who you are and the positive things that stand out most about you.
 2. Identify your goals. Put into writing the three things you'd most like to achieve during the next three months, three years and then ten years.
 3. State your measuring stick. Write the details of how you will know when you've achieved your goals. Be brief and specific.
- To guerrilla market yourself, simply be aware of and in control of the messages you send. Do that and your goals will be a lot easier to attain. **MB**

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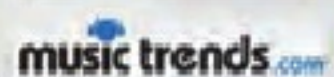
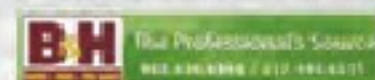
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What If I Don't Have Enough Gigs?

HOW TO FINE-TUNE YOUR MARKETING

BY JOHN STIERNBERG •

If you've been following the Business Chops series over the past four years, by now you've got your stage rig, your vehicle, your support team, and your strategic plan in place. Hopefully you've got as much work as you your plan calls for. But what if the gigs aren't coming in?

Are your competitors getting more work than you? Are referrals not at the level that you hoped? Not sure what to do? This article addresses these issues and recommends three action tips for success.

EVEN GREAT PLAYERS GET IN A SLUMP

Look at your favorite sport and you'll notice that no team or individual player wins every game or championship. Hitters get in a slump. Golfers miss the cut. Football players get sidelined with injuries. Basketball players can't seem to make the downtown shots like they used to.

It happens with entertainers too. Bands and musicians may have a hard time following up a hit record or big tour. Movie actors don't pull at the box office. Best-selling authors have difficulty selling new book projects to publishers. And mobile entertainers' booking calendars get thin from time to time. You are not alone.

Has it happened to you? Most likely, yes. Business slumps happen to everyone at some point. What's changed? Is it the economy? Is it your local market? Or is it your brand reputation? Number of Facebook likes and Twitter followers? Check out all of the above to get a handle on your situation.

WHEN THINGS CHANGE

You can't help but notice when things change. Slower bookings, declining revenues, fewer new signups to your e-mail list;

you get the picture. Some mobile entertainers default to blaming the economy. Have you ever said something like the following to yourself?

They just can't afford quality entertainment.

I went to a wedding where the couple brought an iPod and a boombox.

I've heard that corporate gigs are down because of tighter budgets.

Well, in the 1990s the competition was cassette mixtapes on the boombox, not iPods. Otherwise, I've heard all of those excuses for years, well before the economic downturn of 2008 to 2010. Thankfully things are actually better now for mobile entertainers.

Maybe the market has changed and you haven't. What are you selling today vs. five or ten years ago? How do you promote yourself? Are you aware of what competitors are offering that you don't? In prior Business Chops articles, we talked about the Seven Links in the Marketing Chain: 1) product strategy, 2) pricing strategy, 3) promotion strategy, 4) place/trade area strategy, 5) sales team strategy, 6) target client profiles, and 7) competitive threats. Does your written marketing plan include all seven links?

Before you blame market conditions, take a fresh look at your marketing plan from a comprehensive viewpoint. The marketing chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Here's a key point: Somebody's hiring mobile entertainers in your area. Why don't they hire you?

FINE-TUNE YOUR MARKETING PLAN

I recommend that you review your marketing plan periodically (at least four times

a year) and make adjustments along the way. Here are three suggestions for how to deal with promotion and sales issues.

Action Tip 1: Review and update your promotion plan. Make sure that your brand message is targeted to the kind of clients and gigs that you are looking for NOW, not five years ago. Use a multi-platform promotional approach such as a combination of website, social media, showcase or charity gigs, and publicity. Don't rely on one outlet to get your message to everyone.

Action Tip 2: Match your promotional budget dollars to your sales plan. If you are spending less than 1% of your gross revenue on promotion, it's probably not enough. If you spend more than 10%, it's probably too much.

Action Tip 3: Promote "new and now." Remember the slump analogy? Don't dwell on past successes (or failures). Just like fans of athletes and entertainers, your prospective clients want to know what new services or concepts you are offering now. Positive messages will re-focus their attention and bring in new sales leads and inquiries.

HERE'S THE POINT...

Everyone gets in a slump once in a while. The most successful mobile entertainers recognize danger signals early and respond with fresh marketing plans. Often only minor tweaks are required to achieve a big payoff.

Be sure to implement the Action Tips in sequence: 1) update your marketing plan, 2) invest the right amount in promotion, and 3) promote what's "new and now."

Next issue we'll talk about looking ahead and planning for success. In the meantime, best wishes for success in mobile entertainment in 2011! **MB**



John Stiernberg is founder of Stiernberg Consulting (www.stiernberg.com). His book **Succeeding In Music: Business Chops for Performers and Songwriters** is published by Hal Leonard Books. Contact John via e-mail at john@stiernberg.com. You can find John on LinkedIn, Plaxo, and Facebook and follow him on Twitter.

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See Spot, Run

BY MARK JOHNSON •



The future of music delivery for the masses is named “Spotify,” and it picks up directly where Napster, Pandora, iTunes, Rhapsody and others leave off with their comparatively indirect methods.

Spotify is extolled as providing instant, free access to virtually any song. No limited song lists, as with other pay web sites. No randomness, like free websites. Free is free.

Playing any streamed song is free. For a small fee per month, the accompanying ads are removed, and for a little more the songs can be save onto any MP3 device.

More good news. Spotify is completely legitimate and has the full cooperation of all record companies. Thus, a catalog of at least 15 million songs is available.

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UBIQUITOUS

Let’s look at what Spotify might mean to your mobile DJ business. There are two major points—a good one and a bad one:

The good point is that anyone, anywhere could instantly play any song at any time.

The bad point is that anyone, anywhere could instantly play any song at any time.

Personally, I don’t think Spotify is a good thing.

This is one very large step in lowering the barrier to entering the mobile DJ profession. Many years ago, as mentioned in previous articles, a DJ had to physically acquire

of songs is now measured in hours to days instead of months to years.

So, one of our strengths was owning a large portable music collection that mere mortals could have never acquired. That will completely vanish in the new age of Spotify.

Perhaps the most advanced mobile DJ today has a wi-fi enabled laptop and could purchase a missing request from iTunes during his party and play it minutes later. While this may have made you appear somewhat special, it really won’t anymore with Spotify.

Today, if you had your own private music server and were remotely connected to it, then you could claim access to 100,000+ songs on your server. But if the “server” is the Internet itself, then everyone has the same access to the same songs.

Again, borrowing the phrase from *The Incredibles* when the bad guy has the good guys captured and tied up: “When everyone is special, then no one is.”

Thus, the more dependent we are on the same delivery methods as everyone, i.e. instant downloads, etc., then we lose that differentiation. Now, more than ever, our DJ personality and experience must prevail, instead of a claim of owning or having easy access to the music.

Gone are the days of a turntable coffin sitting on top of a rack with a mixer, pre-amp, equalizer and power amps. Gone are the days of large, heavy speakers. Gone are the days of crates of 12” records or boxes of 45s and CDs.

Now, a regular laptop is plugged into

these two tangible elements (music acquisition and gear ownership/setup) have been reduced to a few hours worth of work. So what’s left?

Now, more than ever, it should be our purpose to reduce the focus on these now-common elements and redirect our clients’ attention to more intangible elements. Here’s a brief list of items to focus on:

Overall Expression of Professionalism. While an often misused word, professionalism simply implies an attitude towards complete customer satisfaction. From the initial advertising, through the pre-event experience and of course the actual performance, we should feel under constant scrutiny to always put our best foot forward.

Song Sequencing: If you’re simply playing songs, then you are no more than a human jukebox. It’s a practiced art to put together sets of songs with a coherent theme for the audience’s enjoyment. Even software that suggests or picks similar songs based on BPM or genre tags can’t replace a DJ’s knowledge of the event (before and during) and the ability to pick songs appropriately. (Yet.)

Personality: Just because you have the music and hardware doesn’t mean that you know how to work with people. This is one thing you can’t transfer from one person to another with a USB cable.

Microphone Skills. Knowing what to say, when to say it and how to say it clearly is a learned skill. Although some might have a natural aptitude for this, any motivated individual can learn. There are vocal coaches and

One of our strengths was owning a large portable music collection... That will completely vanish in the new age of Spotify.

a substantial collection of records, tapes, mini-discs or CDs. Records and CDs were the most prevalent. Tapes or mini-discs could be copied from other sources but that took a lot of time and it was probably worth it just to simply purchase the record or CD.

Now, a DJ collection is completely contained in any laptop. Even the most modest model (or even an iPod) can hold 5,000 to 10,000 songs. Plus, the time to acquire and, more importantly, clone this number

a multi-function mixer sending the audio signal to a pair of powered speakers. Last time I checked, the DJ stores weren’t limiting these purchases only to “professional DJs.” Now, anyone with a laptop can plop down \$1,000 in the afternoon and be a DJ that evening. So much for barriers to entry.

IT’S IN THE WAY THAT YOU USE IT

Sure, there is a lot more to the mobile DJ business than the music and equipment. But

voice instructors for a reason.

Spotify officially got the green light in the US from the four major record companies in July 2011. Now their European model has become available in the US for any and all to use.

In conclusion: Spotify is not a great help to the mobile DJ business. But how it negatively affects you is totally up to you. **ME**

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